"All the News
That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

LATE EDITION

Today, mostly sunny, very warm in the afternoon, high 83. **Tonight,** partly cloudy, low 62. **Tomorrow,** mostly sunny, dry and very warm. High 89. Weather map, Page B10.

VOL. CLXXII . . . No. 59,806 © 2023 The New York Times Company NEW YORK, THURSDAY, JUNE 1, 2023 $4.00

HOUSE PASSES BILL TO DODGE DEFAULT IN BIPARTISAN VOTE

Coalition Pushes Compromise Through After Far Right and Left Revolt

By CATIE EDMONDSON

WASHINGTON — The House on Wednesday overwhelmingly passed legislation negotiated by President Biden and Speaker Kevin McCarthy to suspend the debt ceiling and set federal spending limits, as a broad bipartisan coalition lined up to cast a critical vote to pull the nation back from the brink of economic catastrophe.

The bill would defer the federal debt limit for two years — allowing the government to borrow unlimited sums as necessary to pay its obligations — while imposing two years of spending caps and a string of policy changes that Republicans demanded in exchange for allowing the country to avoid a disastrous default. The 314-to-117 vote came days before the nation was set to exhaust its borrowing limit, and after a marathon set of talks between White House negotiators and top House Republicans.

With both far-right and hard-left lawmakers in revolt over the deal, it fell to a bipartisan coalition powered by Democrats to push the bill over the finish line, throwing their support behind the compromise in an effort to break the fiscal stalemate that had gripped Washington for weeks. On the final vote, 149 Republicans and 165 Democrats backed the measure, while 71 Republicans and 46 Democrats opposed it.

That was a blow to the Republican speaker, whose hard-fought victory on the measure was dampened by the fact that more Democrats ultimately voted for the bill than members of his own party.

The measure nearly collapsed on its way to the House floor, when hard-right Republicans sought to block its consideration, and in a suspenseful scene, Democrats waited several minutes before swooping in to supply their votes for a procedural measure that allowed the plan to move ahead.

The deal would suspend the $31.4 trillion borrowing limit until January 2025. It would cut federal spending by $1.5 trillion over a decade, according to the Congressional Budget Office, by effectively freezing some funding that had been projected to increase next year and then limiting spending to 1 percent growth in 2025, which is considered a cut because it would be at a lower level than inflation. The legislation would also impose stricter work requirements for food stamps, claw back some funding for I.R.S. enforcement and unspent coronavirus relief money, speed the permitting of new energy projects and officially end Mr. Biden's student loan repayment freeze.

Continued on Page A16



KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Speaker Kevin McCarthy after the House on Wednesday overwhelmingly passed a bill to defer the debt ceiling and curtail spending.



PETE MAROVICH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The president on Wednesday.

A Poisonous Cold War Remnant That Still Escapes a Solution

54 Million Gallons of Radioactive Sludge Remain Buried

By RALPH VARTABEDIAN

RICHLAND, Wash. — From 1950 to 1990, the U.S. Energy Department produced an average of four nuclear bombs every day, turning them out of hastily built factories with few environmental safeguards that left behind a vast legacy of toxic radioactive waste.

Nowhere were the problems greater than at the Hanford Site in Washington State, where engineers sent to clean up the mess after the Cold War discovered 54 million gallons of highly radioactive sludge left from producing the plutonium in America's atomic bombs, including the one dropped on the Japanese city of Nagasaki in 1945.

Cleaning out the underground tanks that were leaching poisonous waste toward the Columbia River just six miles away and somehow stabilizing it for permanent disposal presented one of the most complex chemical problems ever encountered. Engineers thought they had solved it years ago with an elaborate plan to pump out the sludge, embed it in glass and deposit it deep in the mountains of the Nevada desert.

But construction of a five-story, 137,000 square-foot chemical treatment plant for the task was halted in 2012 — after an expenditure of $4 billion — when it was found to be riddled with safety defects. The naked superstructure of the plant has stood in mothballs for 11 years, a potent symbol of the nation's failure, nearly 80 years after the Second World War, to deal decisively with the atomic era's deadliest legacy.

The cleanup at Hanford is now at an inflection point. The Energy Department has been in closed-door negotiations with state officials and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, trying to revamp the plan. But many fear the most likely compromises, which could be announced in the coming months, will put the speed and quality of the cleanup at risk.

The government now appears to be seriously considering whether it will be necessary to leave thousands of gallons of leftover waste buried forever in Hanford's shallow underground tanks, according to some of those familiar with the negotiations, and pro-

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Erdogan's Win Heightens Fears Of Homophobia

*This article is by **Ben Hubbard**, **Elif Ince** and **Safak Timur**.*

ISTANBUL — When Yasemin Oz, a lesbian lawyer in Istanbul, heard President Recep Tayyip Erdogan claiming victory after a runoff election on Sunday, she said she feared for the future. In his speech, he declared "family is sacred for us" and insisted that L.G.B.T.Q. people would never "infiltrate" his governing party.

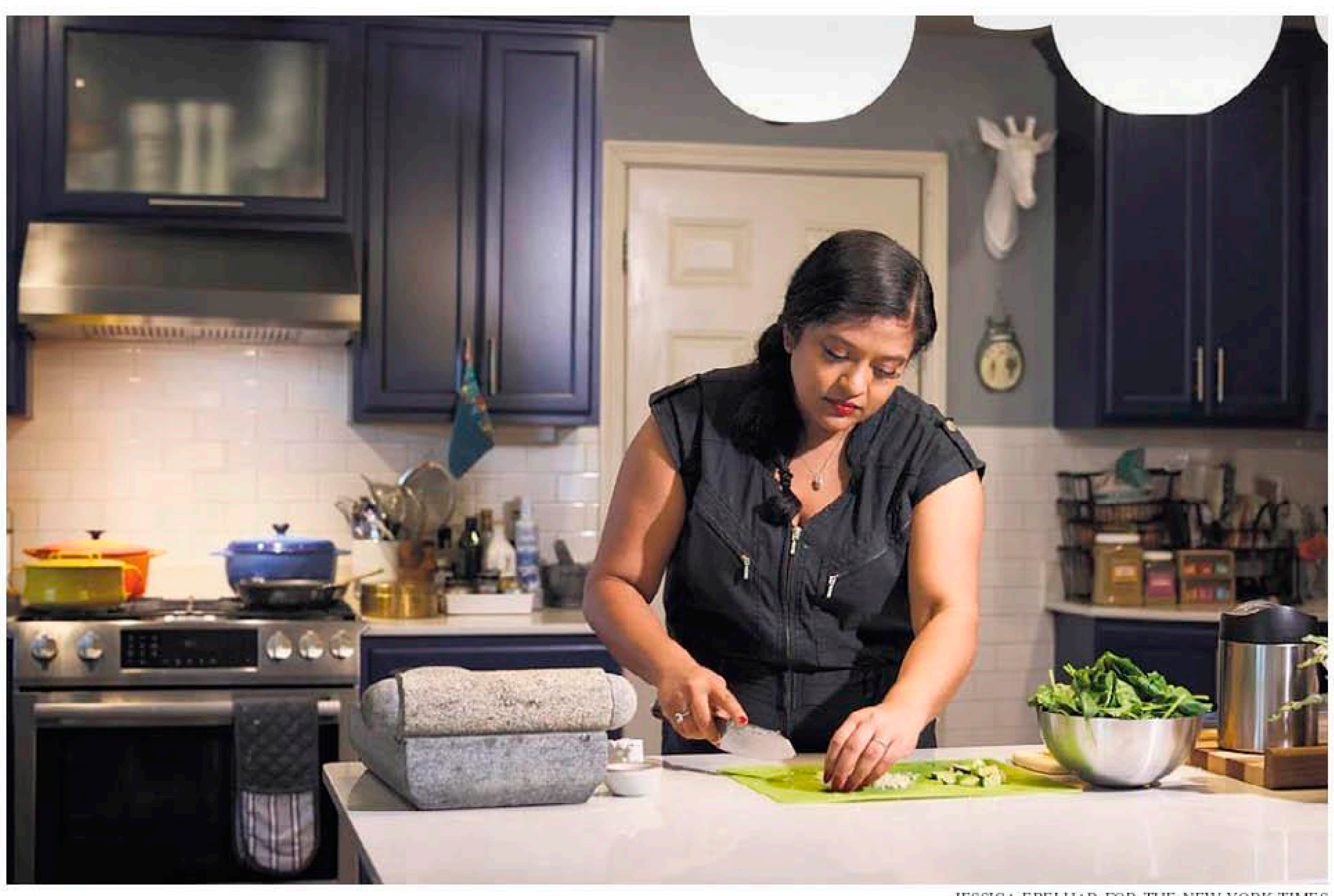
They were familiar themes, heard often throughout Mr. Erdogan's campaign for re-election: He frequently attacked L.G.B.T.Q. people, referring to them as "deviants" and saying they were "spreading like the plague." But Ms. Oz said she had hoped it was just electioneering to rally the president's conservative base.

"I was already worried about what was to come for us," said Ms. Oz, 49. But after the speech, she thought: "It will get harsher."

The rights and freedoms of L.G.B.T.Q. citizens became a lightning-rod issue during this year's election campaign. Mr. Erdogan, facing the greatest political threat of his two decades as the country's dominant leader and seeking to woo conservatives, repeatedly attacked his opponents for supposedly supporting gay rights. The anti-Erdogan opposition mostly avoided the topic for fear of alienating some of its own voters.

That left many L.G.B.T.Q. people fearing that the discrimination they have long faced by the government and conservative parts of society could worsen — and

Continued on Page A8



JESSICA EBELHAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Sam Fore, a finalist for a James Beard award, was investigated for some of her social media posts.

When Chefs Are Honored, and Investigated

Leading Food Awards Seek to Curb Abuse. Results Are Mixed.

By BRETT ANDERSON and JULIA MOSKIN

The chef Sam Fore received an ominous voice mail message last month from an unknown number. The caller identified himself as a private investigator working for the James Beard Foundation. Later that day, Ms. Fore found herself on a Zoom call, answering questions from him and another man.

"They said to me, 'We have an anonymous complaint we have to ask you about,'" she said.

Ms. Fore is a finalist in the James Beard awards, which for nearly three decades have been considered the most prestigious culinary honors in the United States, the so-called Oscars of the food world. As the #MeToo movement led to high-profile revelations of misbehavior and workplace abuse in the restaurant world in recent years, the Beard foundation overhauled its processes to make the awards more equitable and diverse, and to ensure that chefs with troubling histories are not honored.

Ms. Fore is among the first subjects of an investigatory process created in 2021 as part of that overhaul. But in many ways she is the kind of chef the retooled awards are meant to recognize more fully. Early indications suggest that the new process is vulnerable to failure in several ways.

While the awards have historically honored mostly white chefs serving European-derived food in expensive urban restaurants — in fact, the other four finalists in the Best Chef: Southeast category with Ms. Fore are white men — her business, Tuk Tuk, is a pop-up

Continued on Page A15

Climate Crises Force Insurers To Recalculate

*This article is by **Christopher Flavelle**, **Jill Cowan** and **Ivan Penn**.*

The climate crisis is becoming a financial crisis.

Last week, the largest homeowner insurance company in California, State Farm, announced that it would stop selling coverage to homeowners. That's not just in wildfire zones, but everywhere in the state.

Insurance companies, tired of losing money, are raising rates, restricting coverage or pulling out of some areas altogether — making it more expensive for people to live in their homes.

"Risk has a price," said Roy Wright, the former official in charge of insurance at the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and now head of the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety, a research group. "We're just now seeing it."

In parts of eastern Kentucky ravaged by storms last summer, the price of flood insurance is set to quadruple. In Louisiana, the top insurance official says the market is in crisis, and is offering millions of dollars in subsidies to try to draw insurers to the state.

And in much of Florida, homeowners are increasingly struggling to buy storm coverage. Most big insurers have pulled out of the state already, sending homeowners to smaller private companies that are straining to stay in business — a possible glimpse into California's future if more big insurers leave.

State Farm, which insures more

Continued on Page A19

DeSantis Takes Pokes at Trump, But Cautiously

By SHANE GOLDMACHER and NICHOLAS NEHAMAS

PELLA, Iowa — Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida came to Iowa for his first trip as a presidential candidate and made plain that he was done being Donald J. Trump's punching bag.

After absorbing months of attacks from Mr. Trump that went mostly unanswered, Mr. DeSantis has borrowed one of his rival's favorite lines — "I'm going to counterpunch" — and jabbed back.

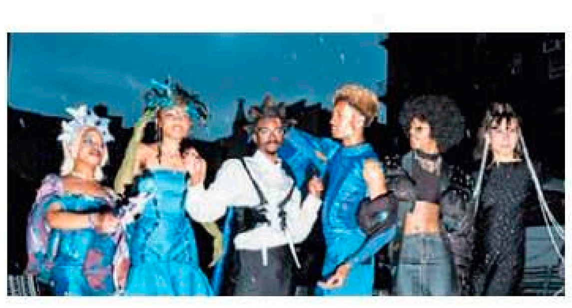
He called one of the spending bills that Mr. Trump signed "grotesque" and accused him of increasing the national debt. He said the way Mr. Trump had sided with Disney in Mr. DeSantis's war with the entertainment giant was "bizarre."

He described Mr. Trump's criticism of the governor's handling of Covid as "ridiculous." And he dared Mr. Trump to take a position on the debt-limit bill pending in Washington.

"Are you leading from the front?" Mr. DeSantis said, almost teasingly. "Or are you waiting for polls to tell you what position to take?"

A tricky balancing act lies ahead for Mr. DeSantis. All of those comments came not onstage in his first campaign speech before hundreds of Republicans at an evangelical church, but during a 15-minute news conference with reporters afterward. He did not mention Mr. Trump by name when he spoke directly to voters in each of his first four Iowa stops,

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Majoring in Glamour

Most schools rev up for the big game. At the High School of Fashion Industries, it's the spring fashion show. PAGE D5

Transgender Model Looks Back

"Horse Barbie," a candid new memoir by

INTERNATIONAL A4-11

'Precision Strikes' Kill Civilians

Palestinians in Gaza say Israel's strikes on Islamic Jihad are collective punishment, aimed at making them fear who their neighbors might be. PAGE A4

Kremlin Cries Foul on Drones

Russian officials said Ukraine's allies should have condemned the strike on civilian parts of Moscow. PAGE A10

ARTS C1-8

Learning to Play Nice

The writers of "Ted Lasso" transformed

NATIONAL A12-20

Oral History Adds Perspective

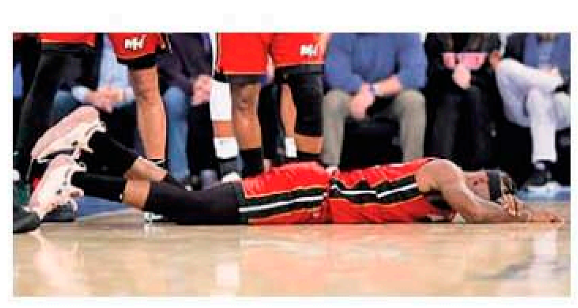
A first set of interviews with Obama administration officials, and others with insights to the era, offers a fresh look at a consequential presidency. PAGE A12

New Defense for Hunter Biden

Lawyers for the president's son believe that a Supreme Court ruling on gun rights would make a case against their client moot. PAGE A16

Tape of Trump on Secret Files

Federal prosecutors have obtained a recording of the former president dis-



SPORTS B8-9

The N.B.A.'s Bad Actors

Stars like LeBron James and Jimmy Butler, above, have been hamming it up to draw calls. But, our columnist writes, they could use acting lessons. PAGE B8

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BUSINESS B1-7

Stir Over Electric Subsidies

The European Union is trying to assemble the building blocks to produce electric cars, but incentives in the Inflation Reduction Act are luring companies to the United States instead. PAGE B1

A Remote Work Connection

At Amazon, warehouse workers have shown support for corporate colleagues, noting they have nothing to gain if office workers lose flexibility that the pandemic proved possible. PAGE B1

VISIT…

LANZAROTE Caliente.com

Inside The Times

The New York Times

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The Newspaper and Beyond

TODAY'S PAPER

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Crossword C3	Weather B10
Obituaries A21	Classified Ads B9







VIDEO

For the tap dancer Ja'Bowen, the subway platform is a stage. Stumbling upon him "is like uncovering a New York City art secret," wrote the dance critic Gia Kourlas. Watch and hear Ja'Bowen's rhythmic footwork at *nytimes.com/arts*.

QUIZ

The U.S. debt ceiling, a warning from the nation's top health official and a royal coronation. Students: How closely did you follow the headlines in May? Test your knowledge of current events with The Learning Network's final news quiz of the 2022-23 school year. Take it at *nytimes.com/learning*.

COOKING

The Times Cooking team's recipes for sheet cake are an easier lift than layer cakes and perfect for feeding a crowd. Try Texas sheet cake, butter mochi, no-bake cheesecake bars and more at *nytcooking.com*.

Quote of the Day

"It feels to me like kind of an eye-for-an-eye situation: You're not helping anyone — you're just hurting everyone."

JAKE SKLAREW, *a software engineer at Starbucks who said that it wouldn't make sense for the company to end remote work for some just because not everyone, roughly about 250,000 of the company's U.S. employees, can do it. Page B1.*

The Story Behind the Story



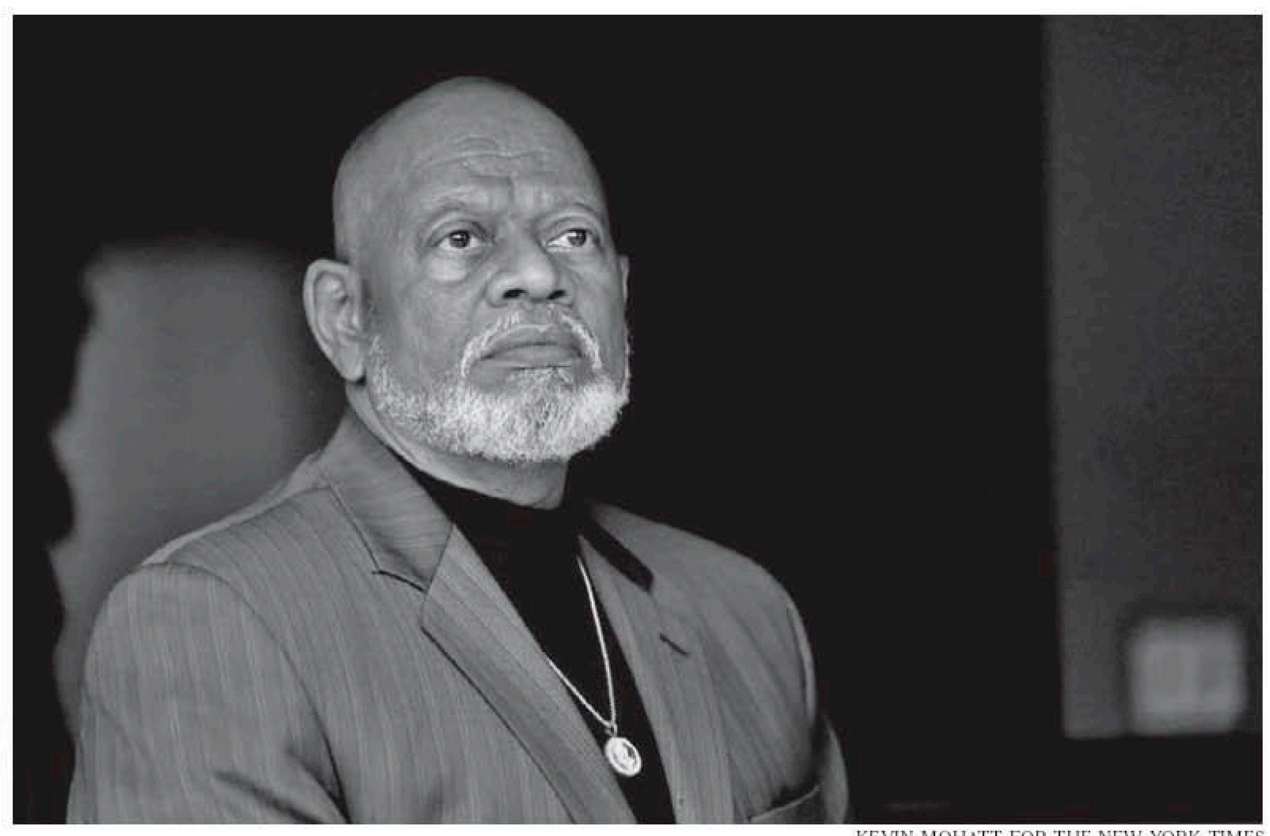
CORNELL WATSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A survey revealed that police violence affects not only victims, their families and bystanders, but those indirectly exposed to the incidents as well.

Exploring the Emotional Toll of Police Violence

By TIFFANIE GRAHAM

The Times spoke with more than 100 Black people in 20 U.S. cities for an article about the psychological strain of police violence. Tiffanie Graham, an editor on the project, shares more.



KEVIN MOHATT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

"I'm saddened more than anything," Thomas Mayes said of watching videos of police violence.

"It's almost paranoia, a paranoia that there's no safe place," said Thomas Mayes, a 70-year-old pastor from Aurora, Colo., reacting to police brutality against Black people.

When police officers injure or kill someone, the psychological effects can stretch beyond those who are directly involved. As video footage spreads, viewers may see themselves or loved ones reflected in the victim.

In a 2021 study of emergency room data from hospitals in five states, researchers found a correlation between police killings of unarmed Black people and a rise in the number of depression-related E.R. visits among Black people. A 2018 study found that Black people who were exposed to news about police shootings in the states where they lived reported adverse mental health effects for up to three months after the shootings.

The research prompted a question: What is the personal impact behind these statistics?

To answer that, the Well desk at The New York Times dispatched reporters to interview 110 Black people of varying generations and socioeconomic groups in 20 U.S. cities. My colleague Patia Braithwaite and I combed through the interviews, hearing from people whose experiences ranged in intensity from numbness to panic attacks. Some people said they did not have the time or resources to address their emotions. Many were unsure of how to process this unique set of repeated circumstances.

The people included in our article, "The Toll of Police Violence on Black People's Mental Health," which was published online last week and appeared in print on Tuesday, make up only a small portion of the many who shared their stories. Their testimonials show how even those indirectly exposed to violence can still suffer from mental strain.

We also teamed up with Morning Consult, a polling company, to survey more than 1,500 Black Americans about whether exposure to police brutality had affected their lives or their mental state. Over half of respondents reported feeling ongoing sadness, anger and fear about police violence. The survey also found that Black people feel more safe than unsafe when they see a police officer; others feel anxious when they encounter a police officer.

This four-month process of reporting and editing took its own emotional toll on Patia and me. We stepped away when the stories began to weigh heavily on us, but remained motivated to dive back in soon afterward. It was important to us to make sure that everyone who took part was heard and given the attention they deserved, and for us to provide a balanced report.

We chose to narrate these stories using intimate portraiture, like the one shown above. The images allow you to see who these words are coming from, and we hope, interpret the world from their perspective.

The photographer Cornell Watson's black-and-white photo illustrations provide evocative representations of the statistics in the article. The people's faces bring these vulnerable accounts to life and connect you to the human being behind them.

The reality of police brutality is not new, so we wanted to focus on the emotional and psychological ripple effects of these incidents and explore how people who feel those effects cope while living their lives.

We hope that after reading the article, you're left with a deeper understanding of the lasting impact, beyond the headlines and video images.

Read the article: nytimes.com/black-mental-health-police-violence. To subscribe to Race/Related, where this essay first appeared, visit nytimes.com/newsletters.

Today's Top Trending Headlines

Climate Shocks Are Making Parts of America Uninsurable. It Just Got Worse. If you live in an area that is prone to natural disasters, insurance companies may be pulling out the safety net. State Farm in California announced that it would stop selling homeowner coverage to most new applicants because of "rapidly growing catastrophe exposure." In other states, insurance companies are raising their rates.

20 Looks That Did the Most at Cannes The two-week Cannes Film Festival drew lots of A-list celebrities playing dress-up for the world's fashion lenses. The Times Styles desk highlighted 20 looks that stood out, among them Helen Mirren in a cornflower-blue Del Core gown that matched her nails and hair and the director Ramata-Toulaye Sy in a wide-leg multicolor Chanel pantsuit.

James Beard Foundation, Whose Awards Honor Chefs, Is Now Investigating Them In the wake of the #MeToo movement, the James Beard Foundation is investigating chefs and restaurants before awarding them the so-called "Oscars of the food world." They are looking into reports of bullying and "targeted harassment," according to the food reporters Brett Anderson and Julia Moskin.

How to Get Absolutely No Sun This Summer Madeleine Aggeler, a writer who "burns easily," reported on ways to limit your sun exposure, including reapplying sunscreen every two hours "across every exposed bit of skin, including your hands and the tips of your ears." The photographer Jamie Lee Taete illustrated Ms. Aggeler's advice with models in full coverage at the beach, in the ocean and in the pool.

A Headline From History

U.S. WILL BAN 'ECSTASY,' A HALLUCINOGENIC DRUG

June 1, 1985. The Drug Enforcement Administration announced an emergency action to ban MDMA, widely known as Ecstasy, according to an Associated Press article that appeared in The Times. The ban came after the D.E.A. received information about parties in Texas encouraging "pyramid" sales of MDMA. The agency was granted the emergency power to ban the drug under the Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984, which had been used only once before when the Justice Department banned synthetic heroin. MDMA is a Schedule I drug, meaning it has high abuse potential and no accepted medical use. But some claim that MDMA has therapeutic benefits: A study from 2021 suggested that when paired with talk therapy, MDMA can bring relief to those with post-traumatic stress disorder.

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Facts of Interest

Britain's swarming season, a natural process in which a honeybee colony splits in half and leaves with a queen bee in search of a new home, typically takes place from May to July.

'Swarming' Keeps U.K. Beekeepers Busy A7

When the Beatles wrote the song "Yesterday," they famously gave it the working title "Scrambled Eggs."

'Mongolian Rhapsody'? A Rock What-If. C1

The quits rate — an indicator of how confident workers are in leaving a job and finding employment elsewhere — was 3 percent, seasonally adjusted, in April 2022. It has since retreated to 2.4 percent, just above its prepandemic peak.

Rising Job Openings Defy Cooling Trend B3

Charlie Chaplin's toothbrush mustache, that small patch above his lip, was adopted specifically for its humorous appeal, before becoming associated with Hitler and forever losing its place in the fashion cycle.

The Mustache Is Back, In Its Many Incarnations D4

The pandemic drove 97 million additional people into extreme poverty in 2020, according to a World Bank estimate.

How to Cut Death Rates for Women? Give Cash. A12

The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, which began in 1970, is one of the city's cultural staples. This year's event drew about 460,000 attendees and featured hundreds of performers across 14 stages.

If Hawaiian Shirts Are Too Subtle For You D6

The Mini Crossword

■	1	2	3	■
4				5
6				
7				
■	8			■

6/1/2023 BY JOEL FAGLIANO

ACROSS
1 Toasted three-ingredient sandwich
4 Elementary particle
6 Up to
7 When it's midnight in Chicago, what time is it in Shanghai?
8 Decade sections: Abbr.

DOWN
1 Word before "ears" or "slope"
2 "See ya!"
3 Expedia bookings
4 Status ___
5 Airline whose name is three consecutive consonants in the alphabet

SOLUTION TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

■	■	S	A	P
■	N	A	P	A
H	O	U	R	S
A	S	C	O	T
H	Y	E	N	A



GIZEM VURAL

Reader Corner

Responses and Replies

Californians' proximity to mountains, coastline and forests often also means proximity to the creatures that live in those expanses. Inspired by her colleague Jill Cowan's article about P-22, a mountain lion that became an icon for Angelenos, Soumya Karlamangla, who writes the California Today newsletter, asked readers to share stories about beloved wild animals in their corner of the state. Here are two edited tales.

Over the past several years, we have shared our restaurant property with a rather precocious but friendly bear. He comes in the spring and disappears around Christmas. Rupert, the name we've given the bear, lounges around the back lot area and keeps the grubs and blackberries under control, seldom venturing into our main backyard. Our dog, Rosie, of course, remains on alert.
— TERRY EILERS, MOUNT SHASTA

Albert the albino peacock is quite well known in Boulder Creek, where, during the C.Z.U. Lightning Complex fires, locals tried to evacuate him, but he was too big and couldn't fit into anything. Because the town didn't burn, he was fine and, as far as I know, is still alive and around today. Some posters and T-shirts were made with his image as a symbol of resilience, like a phoenix rising from the ashes.
— LAURA TESTA-REYES, BOULDER CREEK

On the Scene

What Times Journalists Are Seeing and Hearing in the Field



GREGG VIGLIOTTI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Catherine Cole, center, of Grannies Respond spoke to migrants in Newburgh, N.Y., on May 19.

In late May, a group of migrants got off a bus in front of a Ramada Inn in Newburgh, N.Y. They were welcomed by members of the nonprofit Grannies Respond, a grass-roots volunteer network dedicated to helping migrants. Tammy La Gorce, a Times contributor, visited the parking lot. She shares what she saw.

Outside the hotel, men kicked a soccer ball while volunteers, most of them retirement age, unloaded supplies from their cars. The scene was the result of Mayor Eric Adams's decision to send migrants to towns north of New York City, like Newburgh. The Grannies have a strong whisper network. Through their sister chapter in the city, they knew about some needs like toothpaste, but they also spent time assessing other needs.

Catherine Cole, 67, of Beacon, N.Y., is a founding member and the executive director of the nonprofit. It was created in 2018 to protest the separation of families at the U.S. southern border. Now it has a presence in 14 states. The recent influx of migrants, which caused a state of emergency to be declared in Newburgh and beyond, has members rallying to procure everything from underwear to food.

The soccer game ended when the supplies were ready to be distributed. Victor and Lando, both 23, accepted some toiletries and underwear. They had made the trip together from Angola. "We're like brothers," said Victor, who hopes to become an electrician. Lando wants to work with computers. Both men said their first priority is to learn English. Asked why he had boarded the bus, Victor told me that "it was suggested by the city."

The Grannies, some of whom are decidedly not grandmothers, travel with signs so they will be recognized as supportive volunteers (and in case they encounter anti-migrant protests). Valerie Carlisle, 71, a leader in the Hudson Valley chapter, said that she remains committed to helping the new arrivals. "They don't come with AR-15s in their arms," she told me. "A lot of them come with babies in their arms."

Here to Help

Gear to Help You Endure Travel Delays

It seems no mode of transportation is safe from massively frustrating obstacles. The only way to make it through endless hours of a travel delay is to plan ahead. This gear can help get you through. ELISSA SANCI

A portable phone charger. Most airports and train terminals have charging stations, but if the area is packed with travelers trying to juice up their devices, you may not be able to find a free outlet. Bringing along a portable power bank ensures that your devices don't die before your departure.

A compact travel pillow and an effective eye mask. If you have hours to wait out before a flight, a nap may help stave off crankiness. A cozy travel pillow, along with an eye mask to block out harsh fluorescent lights, can turn an uncomfortable situation into a slightly more comfortable one. You might not get the best sleep of your life, but some rest is better than none.

A reusable water bottle. Sipping from your own bottle while waiting beats refilling the crushed plastic water bottle you overpaid for at the terminal. Bottles that feature a spout with a twist-on flip cap allow you to drink on the go without the worry of water dribbling down your chin.

Fun card games. If you're traveling with a buddy, kill time with a card game that whips up some friendly rivalry. A good travel game should be small enough to fit in your bag, not take up too much space on a table and be a quick play.



ROZETTE RAGO

Good noise-cancelling headphones. Terminals are hectic, especially after mass delays and cancellations. Tuning out the noise can help you keep calm in a stressful situation, but you'll want to make sure you don't completely block out helpful announcements. We recommend models that give you the option to turn off noise cancellation to be more aware of your surroundings. Once you're officially en route to your destination, you can flip the noise-cancelling feature back on and dial into your favorite comfort Netflix watch.

An app that helps you breathe through it. A quick meditation session can help melt the tension from your shoulders. With a good pair of headphones, you can almost pretend you're relaxing on a white sand beach and not in an uncomfortable chair outside a Hudson News.

Elissa Sanci is a senior staff writer at Wirecutter, a product recommendation site owned by The New York Times Company. For more advice, visit nytimes.com/wirecutter.


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International

The New York Times





A hole left by a bomb that entered the home of the Khoswan family, in a strike on an Islamic Jihad member who lived below, in Gaza City. Right, Menna Khoswan mourned her father.

The Civilian Anguish Behind Israel's 'Precision Strikes'

When Islamic Jihad Is the Target in Gaza But Others Are Killed

By RAJA ABDULRAHIM
Photographs by SAMAR ABU ELOUF



The remains of Abu Ebeid's family home. Below, Asmahan Adas, whose daughters were killed in an airstrike, receiving mourners at her parents' house.





Alaa Adas, the father of Iman, 17, and Dania, 19, who died in an Israeli airstrike on Gaza, in the bedroom where they were killed. Dania was to be married next month; her fiancé visits her grave every day to talk to her.

GAZA CITY — As the Khoswan family slept, the Israeli military dropped three GBU-39 bombs into their sixth-floor apartment. One of the bombs exploded just outside the parents' bedroom, leaving the apartment looking as if a tornado had swept through, killing three family members.

But they were not the stated target of the attack last month.

The Israeli military had dropped the bombs into their home to assassinate a commander of the Palestinian armed group Islamic Jihad who lived in the apartment below.

Jamal Khoswan, a dentist, Mirvat Khoswan, a pharmacist, and their son, a 19-year-old dental student, were killed in the strike as well as the Islamic Jihad commander who lived downstairs, Tareq Izzeldeen, and two of his children, a girl, 11, and a boy, 9.

"Commanders have been targeted before," Menna Khoswan, 16, said last month at a memorial service for her father at the hospital where he served as chairman of the board. "But to target the commander and those around him, honestly this is something we didn't expect."

Israel says that it conducts "precision strikes" aimed at taking out armed groups' commanders or operation sites, and that it does not target civilians. But the airstrikes are often conducted in heavily populated areas, and many Palestinians in Gaza say they amount to a collective punishment aimed at making them fearful about who their neighbors might be.

Israel also destroys entire residential buildings or towers if it believes an armed group has an office or apartment there, although it usually issues an evacuation warning beforehand.

Menna's parents and brother were among at least 12 civilians killed by Israeli strikes during five days of fighting between Israel and Islamic Jihad last month, according to the Palestinian Center for Human Rights. Israel says that nine civilians were killed in the strikes.

Six senior leaders of the armed group that Israel said had been responsible for rocket attacks on Israel were killed before a cease-fire was reached on May 13. The Israeli military said that Islamic Jihad had launched nearly 1,500 rockets indiscriminately toward Israel over the course of several days. Two people were killed in Israel, including an Israeli woman and a Palestinian worker from Gaza.

Members of the Khoswan family say they knew that an Islamic Jihad commander lived in the apartment below them and worried that he could be the target of an Israeli strike. Israel has designated Islamic Jihad as a terrorist organization — as have countries including the United States and Japan — and has regularly targeted its leaders and fighters.

Yet the Khoswans never thought their apartment would be hit while they were inside, Menna said, describing the shock of being awakened by the explosions ripping through her home.

The Israeli military said it had twice postponed the assassinations of three Islamic Jihad commanders to ensure suitable operational conditions and minimize civilian casualties. But the military did not respond to questions about why it had targeted the three Islamic Jihad commanders on May 9 while they were at home or why it had launched the three bombs targeting the Islamic Jihad commander through the Khoswan home.

The Israeli military "didn't choose to kill the dentist," said Nir Dinar, an Israeli army spokesman, declining to comment further.

The Israeli military released videos of the strikes it carried out, including one showing a man it accused of having fired rockets at Israel being struck in the middle of a road on a bicycle. Another showed a man walking in the courtyard of a complex of buildings for several seconds before entering a building. Once he went inside, the building was blown up.

The military said the videos showed how it had waited for targets to be alone before striking.

During the five days of fighting last month, Israeli strikes destroyed 103 homes, and more than 2,800 others were damaged, according to Gaza's public works department.

Amnesty International has previously said that Israel's pattern of attacks on residential homes in Gaza displayed a disregard for the lives of Palestinian civilians and could amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity.

In the 11-day 2021 war between Hamas and Israel, Israel struck four tower buildings, destroying three of them; one had housed some of the world's leading news media organizations, including The Associated Press and Al Jazeera.

The Israeli military said that it had destroyed the tower because the building also contained military assets belonging to Hamas, the political and armed group that controls and governs Gaza. The A.P. reported at the time that the tower's owner had been "told he had an hour to make sure everyone has left the building."

Fearing that Israel would destroy entire buildings because they contained offices or homes belonging to members of armed groups, residents of some buildings posted signs in their lobbies warning against renting to departments linked to the Hamas-led government.

Israel has long accused Palestinian armed groups in Gaza of hiding among civilians and using them as human shields. Because the armed groups are homegrown, they live side by side among the people, and their command centers are spread throughout Gaza.

Leaders and members of the groups say that Israel's airstrikes are aimed at hurting the civilian population to undermine public support for them. The groups have wide support among Palestinians for their resistance to the Israeli occupation.

Since the 2021 war, Hamas says it has begun moving its offices away from important infrastructure such as hospitals and schools.

Khaled al-Batsh, an Islamic Jihad leader in Gaza, said his group's members lived in their own communities in the tiny enclave that is home to more than 2.3 million people.

"Where should we go? Should we flee Palestine? Can we go set up a military base in Colorado?" he said. "They target the civilians so they can pit people against us."

South of Gaza City, Ghada Abu Ebeid, 50, was living with a relative last month near the remains of her family's two-story house, which was destroyed in the recent fighting by an Israeli bomb that also sheared off the fronts of nearby buildings.

An hour before the strike, the Israeli military warned residents up to 100 meters away to evacuate their homes, according to the Abu Ebeid family and neighbors.

When asked about the attack, the military referred to a statement saying that it had targeted Islamic Jihad command-and-control centers from which they operate and direct rockets toward Israel.

Ms. Ebeid would not say why she believed Israel had demolished their home. Neighbors said that one of her sons was a member of Islamic Jihad.

Many Gaza residents acknowledge that they do worry about who might move in next door, fearing that their neighbors could become targets. But they put the blame squarely on Israel.

"What kind of precision is this when you kill civilians?" said Asmahan Adas, referring to a strike on the home of her next-door neighbor, Khalil al-Bahtini, another Islamic Jihad commander, that also killed her two teenage daughters. "When Israel wants to kill someone, they can find many different ways to kill, but they want others to die along with their target."

Ms. Adas said that when she knew Mr. Bahtini was at home, she would move her two daughters to the far side of their home, fearing that Israeli bombs could destroy the rooms closest to him.

On the night of May 9, she was unaware that Mr. Bahtini had returned home. Before she went to bed, Ms. Adas said good night to her two daughters, Iman, 17, and Dania, 19, who were sitting on their beds, watching cellphone videos and laughing, she said.

Minutes later, shortly after 2 a.m., three GBU-39 bombs pierced the roof of Mr. Bahtini's second-floor home, killing him, his wife and 5-year-old daughter. The blast also ripped through the bedroom of Ms. Adas's daughters, burying them in rubble.

A week later, Ms. Adas wept as she received mourners at her parents' house. Dania was to be married on July 21. Now, her fiancé visits her grave every day to talk to her.

"I had dreams of taking my daughter out of our home in her wedding dress, not in a burial shroud," Ms. Adas said. "They took everything from me in a second, just so they could kill one person."

Ameera Harouda contributed reporting.


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Irish seaport scenes, from left: David O'Neill removing the helm from his trawler, to keep as a souvenir, in April after the ship's final voyage; teenagers performing traditional music; packing fish.

IRELAND DISPATCH

Ireland Fears Loss of Its Fishing Industry, a Way of Life

By MEGAN SPECIA

UNION HALL, Ireland — Just before midnight, David O'Neill navigated his trawler into the harbor in Union Hall, a small port in southwestern Ireland, the wake from the vessel sending tiny waves slapping against the pier.

The crew swiftly unloaded their catch, using a crane to lift ice-packed crates of haddock and hake from the hold of the Aquila under bright spotlights.

Less than an hour later, the Aquila would depart for its final trip. Two days later, the crew stripped the vessel's contents — chains, buoys, ropes, steel cables, and hooks — and ejected them onto the pier, on their way to a shipyard to be scrapped.

"This is coming with me," Mr. O'Neill said as he unscrewed the Aquila's wooden steering wheel. "It reminds you of all you've been through on this boat."

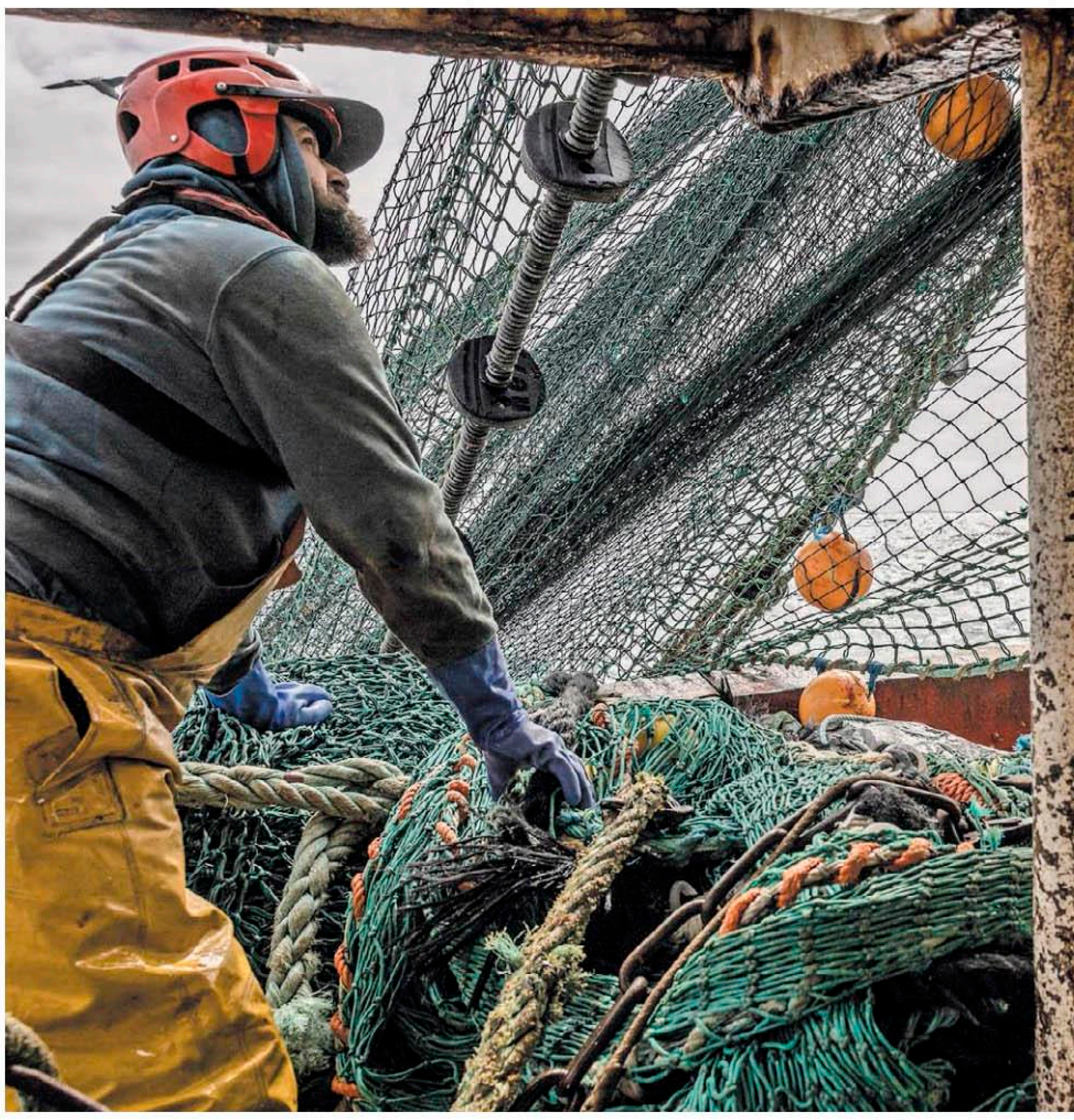
The Aquila is one of dozens of Irish boats being scrapped as part of a voluntary government decommissioning plan introduced after Britain withdrew from the European Union. As part of Britain's withdrawal, the E.U. transferred back 25 percent of its fishing rights in British waters. That, in turn, significantly limited Irish vessels in the numbers of fish they are allowed to catch — an anticipated annual loss of 43 million euros ($46 million), making Ireland one of the European nations most affected.

Although fishing is a small industry in Ireland, in some coastal communities it has been the backbone of the economy, even as it has been whittled down over the years. But beyond economics, fishing has been an essential way of life for generations. Locals fear the Brexit quotas and subsequent retiring of boats will be the final death knell.

"It's bittersweet," said Mr. O'Neill, 37, who has skippered the Aquila for five years. "You spend most of your time battling the boat. But the boat made us a wage every week and brought us home as well."

Elsewhere along Ireland's southwestern coast, in Castletownbere, two fishermen were repairing a net, their hands whipping through the bright green tangle with ease. Behind them, on the pier, stood a memorial to those lost at sea, with dozens of names dating to 1793 providing a roll call of the dead, linked by family roots and shared tragedy, the same last names repeating through several generations.

At the nearby warehouse for Sheehan's Fishing, owned by Jason Sheehan, 35, and his father, Ebbie, Jason, who became a skipper at 19, remembers when fishing was lucrative. But new regulations, shrinking quotas and rising gas prices have amounted to "death by a thousand cuts," he said.









THE NEW YORK TIMES

PHOTOGRAPHS BY FINBARR O'REILLY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Above, crew members hauling in a net aboard Mr. O'Neill's Aquila on its final voyage. Left, Caitlin Ui Aodha, whose family fished for over 150 years and whose husband was lost at sea in 2012, has decommissioned her trawler and opened a restaurant.

"We have fish, that's our currency, that's what we have here," he said. "So we're between a rock and a hard place.'"

"There is a lot of disillusionment," said his father, 64, "because they feel that we were sold out on Brexit."

The men own a number of trawlers together and have decided to decommission two.

"It was a matter of viability," the elder Mr. Sheehan said.

The realigned fishing rights affect the entire Irish industry, but the decommissioning plan applies to the whitefish fleet, which could see up to 30 percent of its vessels scrapped. Larger trawlers that fish farther off the coast for mackerel and herring, among other fish, are also affected; their fishing season has been nearly halved.

Seven hours north in Killybegs, in County Donegal, the trawlers that have already met their quotas have sat idle for weeks. Visitors to the town are greeted by a strong smell of fish, a reminder of the processing plants dotting the town's edges, and of how fishing is core to the identity of this place.

"If you removed the fishing from Killybegs, Killybegs would become a ghost town," said Patrick Murphy, chief executive of the Irish South & West Fish Producer's Organization.

On a recent Thursday night, at the Fleet Inn in Killybegs, a group of children known as the Wild Atlantic Buskers were performing traditional music. Most of their families go back generations in the fishing community.

As the youngsters played reels on the fiddle, accordion, and guitar, one mother pointed out a boy whose grandfather was lost at sea, a girl whose father worked for a net supplier, and another with family who still fishes here.

At the processing factories, change has already come. Martin Meehan, the general manager of Premier Fish Products, said production had nearly halved since last year.

"I have a son myself, and certainly wouldn't be looking for him to come into the industry," said Mr. Meehan, 49.

The decommissioning plan is intended to "restore balance" between the Irish fishing fleet's capacity and the new quotas, according to the government agency in charge. So far, 42 boat owners have accepted offers to scrap their boats. Payments vary, but for a smaller boat, an average amount might be about $1.6 million, often split among multiple shareholders or with a bank.

Cara Rawdon, 64, who has been fishing for four decades out of the northern village of Greencastle, said he received a fair price for his boat. He is retiring.

"There are no young men getting into it here," he said. Coastal communities around Ireland "are being annihilated."

Caitlin Ui Aodha, who also fished these waters, sold her vessel and is using the money to open a restaurant in Dungarvan, in Ireland's southeast.

"You have to adjust, at sea as well as in fishing," said Ms. Ui Aodha, 60. "You're out and it's moving around, and you kind of learn life changes very quickly."

Ms. Ui Aodha was born in a village in the Gaeltacht, the Irish-speaking area of the country, into a family that had fished for over 150 years. She fished through her early adult years, eventually alongside her husband, Michael Hayes, and then turned to raising their five children, while he continued as a skipper.

But the sea claimed the lives of him and four crew members when their boat sank in a storm near Union Hall in 2012.

After his death, Ms. Ui Aodha bought a trawler and took to the sea again. She assumed she would sell the boat when she retired, but things had been difficult for years, and decommissioning felt like her only option. Her boat was scrapped in late April.

"The saddest thing really is to see how, all around the coast, indigenous fishing people like me become extinct, we're just not going to be there," she said, rattling off the names of longtime fishing families. "All these names are disappearing."

But she also spoke with hopeful resilience about what comes next. The restaurant will be called Iasc, or fish in Irish. Photos of Ms. Ui Aodha's father with his boat adorn the wall, she pointed out, as she walked through the unfinished space.

"I've done what I can and we've changed now, and this is just something new," she said, reflecting on her years of fishing. "So I am bringing my world in here."

Finbarr O'Reilly contributed reporting.

Sudan's Army Suspends Cease-Fire Talks, Stalling Efforts to Deliver Aid to Millions

By ABDI LATIF DAHIR

NAIROBI, Kenya — Sudan's army has withdrawn from talks aimed at achieving a full cease-fire and delivering humanitarian aid across the country, it said on Wednesday, raising the specter of escalating clashes as a war between rival generals rages for a second month in Africa's third-largest nation.

The talks, facilitated by Saudi Arabia and the United States, were the only major ongoing official effort to mediate between the Sudanese Army and its paramilitary rival, the Rapid Support Forces. The army's withdrawal from the talks deals a blow to the attempts to decisively end the war, which has released a paroxysm of violence and chaos that have killed hundreds of people and displaced millions more.

The army said in a statement posted to its Facebook page that it was suspending its participation in the talks because the paramilitary forces had failed "to implement any of the provisions of the agreement and to continue violating the armistice." The paramilitary group said on Twitter that it was "unconditionally" backing the Saudi and U.S.-led initiative, and that the violations by the army had "not deterred us from honoring our commitments."

The talks began in the Saudi port city of Jeddah in early May and achieved limited results between the rival groups. The two sides first allowed for aid to come through and later agreed to a seven-day cease-fire that began on May 22. That truce was then extended for five days on Monday as both parties considered ways to allow for deliveries of more aid, the restoration of services like water and electricity, and the evacuation of their forces from urban areas including civilian homes and hospitals.

But even as the talks progressed, forces from the two sides continued to clash, including on Wednesday, with street fighting, drone attacks and airstrikes decimating the health care system and pushing civilians to continue to evacuate the capital, Khartoum, and the adjoining cities of Omdurman and Bahri.

In recent days, the fighting also intensified in El Obeid, the capital of North Kordofan State, according to residents. On social media, each side continued to accuse the other of breaking the cease-fire.

Renewed clashes have also torn through the western region of Darfur, pushing thousands of people to flee and cross into neighboring Chad. This is particularly true of El Geneina, a city in West Darfur where the health facilities have been shattered and all 86 gathering camps for displaced people have been razed, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. A communications blackout has also kept the region cut off from the wider world for more than a week, raising fears of unreported deaths and the unfolding of a dire humanitarian crisis.

The conflict, which began on April 15, has led to the killing of 865 people and the injury of 3,634 others, according to the Sudan Doctors' Union. Almost 1.4 million people have been displaced, with 360,000 of them crossing into neighboring nations like Egypt, Ethiopia and South Sudan, according to the United Nations' refugee agency.

Organizations for journalists and local activists have also accused the warring parties of increasingly targeting their members with home raids and arrests. Factories, banks and small businesses have been looted or destroyed, further damaging an economy that was already ailing from high inflation, spiking food prices and the devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The United Nations said this past month that it would need $2.56 billion to assist those affected.

Rival generals accuse each other of violating their former armistice.

The army, controlled by Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, led by Lt. Gen. Mohamed Hamdan, were long on the same side. In 2019, they helped remove the dictator Omar Hassan al-Bashir, who had held power for three decades. They also carried out a coup that toppled the civilian government in October 2021, effectively scuttling the country's nascent efforts to transition to democratic rule.

But over the past year, the two leaders began to fall out as they vied for supremacy over the northeast African nation — tensions that resulted in open warfare in the capital last month.

As talks for a cease-fire were held in Saudi Arabia, leaders from the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, an eight-nation regional bloc that includes Sudan, also hoped to agree on a road map for future political talks that would bring in various stakeholders including civilian participants. Efforts by the United Nations mission in Sudan to support the country's democratic transition were also recently thrown into limbo, when General al-Burhan called on its head, Volker Perthes, to resign.

On Tuesday evening, the army released a video in which General al-Burhan appeared among a group of cheering soldiers, saying the military was yet to use its "maximum strength." He added: "But if the enemy does not comply and does not respond, we will be forced to use the strongest force that we have."

With the breakdown of the talks in Jeddah, observers are now worried about a protracted conflict that could have serious regional ramifications.

"Sudan is not getting the high-level attention needed to prevent another failed state in the region," said Alan Boswell, the Horn of Africa director at the International Crisis Group, a research organization. "Sudan is collapsing and, thus far, no one seems to be able to do anything to reverse it."

Sunak Still Shadowed By Flubs and Scandals Of His 2 Predecessors

By MARK LANDLER

LONDON — From the moment Prime Minister Rishi Sunak of Britain took occupancy of 10 Downing Street last October, he has been haunted by his predecessors: Boris Johnson, defenestrated after serial scandals, and Liz Truss, deposed after an ill-fated foray into trickle-down economics.

On Thursday afternoon, Mr. Sunak's government faces a deadline to turn over Mr. Johnson's Covid-era text messages, diaries and notebooks to a committee investigating Britain's handling of the pandemic. It is the latest chapter in what seems like a never-ending reckoning with Mr. Johnson's messy tenure.

Yet for all the headlines that Mr. Johnson's misadventures have commanded in recent weeks — including new allegations of flouting Covid lockdown rules — it is the ghost of Mr. Sunak's short-lived predecessor, Ms. Truss, that economists say should keep him up at night.

The British leader's biggest problem is stubborn inflation.

Yields on British government bonds soared last week to nearly the levels that brought down Ms. Truss after only 45 days in office. While the cause of this spike is very different from that under Ms. Truss — fears that inflation is deeply rooted in Britain rather than horror at the previous government's proposed tax cuts — the political cost to Mr. Sunak could be almost as grave, with an election looming in the next 18 months.

Mr. Johnson's story "is, to some extent, surface froth," said Tim Bale, a professor of politics at Queen Mary, University of London. "That isn't to say that the Boris Johnson soap opera can't damage Sunak," he added. "But what drives voters is the more profound question of the economy."

On that issue, the market gyrations are a bad omen. They signal that investors believe the Bank of England will have to raise interest rates a lot further to tamp down Britain's stubbornly high inflation, which could tip the struggling economy into recession. Fear of rate increases led to the cancellation of nearly 800 mortgage deals, which hurt people who are trying to buy homes.

It also raises the risk that Mr. Sunak will fall short of one of his cardinal pledges as prime minister: to cut inflation in half by the end of 2023. Although the inflation rate dipped below double digits last week, to 8.7 percent, prices for food remained unexpectedly high. Britain has now diverged from Germany, France and Spain, where inflation is much lower and is dropping faster than the economists predicted.

"The notion of 'sick man of Europe' has struck again, and when that happens, it's hard to shake it off," said Jonathan Powell, a former chief of staff to Prime Minister Tony Blair. "Sunak keeps being dragged back to the bad old times."

In the case of Mr. Johnson, those bad old times include the lockdown-breaking parties held in Downing Street in 2020 and 2021, which resulted in police fines for both the prime minister and Mr. Sunak, then serving as chancellor of the Exchequer.

The latest flap began when the chairwoman of the Covid-19 Inquiry, Baroness Heather Hallett, asked the Cabinet Office to hand over all communications between Mr. Johnson and fellow ministers during the pandemic, including WhatsApp messages, which have become a favored way for officials to stay in touch.

The Cabinet Office has so far balked, arguing that it has a responsibility to protect the privacy of ministers. It has refused to hand over what it calls "unambiguously irrelevant" material. Ms. Hallett has pressed for unredacted versions of messages, contending that it is the job of the inquiry committee to decide what information is relevant to its investigation of the government's Covid policy.



JUSTIN TALLIS/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak pledged that the inflation rate would be halved by the end of this year.



PETER NICHOLLS/REUTERS

Messages about Covid during the tenure of Boris Johnson, above, are again creating controversy.

The Cabinet Office, analysts said, is wary of setting a precedent and concerned that the disclosure of personal exchanges could embarrass senior officials, including Mr. Sunak. More than 100,000 WhatsApp messages belonging to a former health secretary, Matt Hancock, were leaked to the Daily Telegraph in February, offering an unflattering glimpse into how senior officials talked about the pandemic.

In one text exchange, Mr. Hancock mocked "Eat Out to Help Out," a program designed to lure people back to restaurants, which was sponsored by Mr. Sunak. He referred to it as "eat out to help the virus get about."

In another, the government's top civil servant, Simon Case, warned that Mr. Johnson was a "nationally distrusted" figure who should not announce new social-distancing rules during a bleak phase of the pandemic in 2020.

"In a sense, this is our first WhatsApp inquiry," said Jill Rutter, a former civil servant who is now a senior research fellow at the U.K. in a Changing Europe, a think tank in London. "One of the problems is that officials do things in deeply casual ways on WhatsApp. They mix the personal with policy and politics."

On Wednesday evening, Mr. Johnson said he had submitted a trove of text messages and other material to the Cabinet Office, and he challenged officials to hand it over to the inquiry in unredacted form.

That further complicates the dilemma for the government, since officials had earlier said they no longer had access to the material. It puts Mr. Sunak in an awkward spot, since the government could face a legal challenge if it refuses to comply, which appears likely.

Mr. Johnson has had a chilly rapport with Mr. Sunak since last July, when Mr. Sunak's resignation as chancellor set the stage for Mr. Johnson's downfall.

The former prime minister expressed anger last week when the Cabinet Office referred fresh claims to the police that Mr. Johnson had violated lockdown regulations by inviting friends to his country residence, Chequers.

"Nobody has very high expectations of Boris Johnson," Ms. Rutter said, "but Rishi Sunak may be worried about what might be disclosed."

Given that the inquiry may not conclude until 2027, the prime minister does not have to fear the information coming out until after the next election, which he must call by January 2025. But he will not have that luxury with the economy, which is casting a long shadow over the future of his Conservative Party.

Mr. Sunak, a former Goldman Sachs investment banker, succeeded in calming the markets after he replaced Ms. Truss and reversed her policies. Her budget-busting tax cuts were viewed as so reckless that financial analysts took to calling Britain's elevated bond yields a "moron risk premium."

"In contrast to the moron risk premium, which was driven by crashing the institutions and generally appearing incompetent, this is quite different," said Jonathan Portes, a professor of economics at King's College London. "This is pretty clearly down to the recent inflation numbers."

Where some analysts say Mr. Sunak erred was in setting a hard target for cutting inflation, especially since the Bank of England, not the government, possesses the levers to do that. What once looked like an easy win now looks touch-and-go.

"The market thinks the U.K. has a persistent inflation problem, relative to other advanced economies," Professor Portes said.

'Swarming' Keeps U.K. Beekeepers Busy

By ISABELLA KWAI

LONDON — The sight is one that beekeepers say is understandably intimidating to the ordinary person out for a walk: a sliver of sky suddenly darkening amid the collective roar of thousands of honeybees before they cluster on branches or bushes.

In Britain, the behavior, known as swarming, typically takes place from May to July and is a natural process in which a honeybee colony splits in half and leaves with a queen bee in search of a new home. But the country is currently experiencing a greater numbers of sightings for this time of year, most likely thanks to unseasonably warm weather that followed a cold, wet spell.

As a result, beekeepers and pest-control workers who catch the swarms are reporting a surge in calls for their help as members of the public spot the clusters in backyards, in chimneys and even on barriers along city streets.

"We're fully booked for the next four weeks," said Rob Davies, a pest controller in Shropshire, in central England, who specializes in dismantling and rebuilding structures like chimneys to rescue honeybees, adding that he was getting "ridiculous" volumes of people calling for assistance.

Some of the bee rescuers are even having to order new equipment to keep up with the demand.

Although it is difficult to determine an exact figure for the current level of swarms, the British Beekeepers Association, which has almost 30,000 members, said that many were seeing more swarms than usual. Traffic for the association's swarm removal site is up 19 percent compared with this time last year, said Ian Campbell, a spokesman.

"It's their form of reproduction on a mass scale," Mr. Campbell said of the honeybees. "But this year, it's seemed to come a bit earlier. It's seemed to come in force."

Francis Ratnieks, a professor of apiculture at the University of Sussex, said that a recent stretch of sunny, drier days in Britain had created optimal conditions for honeybee colonies to split off.

"It probably means that we're having half-decent weather for once," he said.

Sunny, drier days set honeybee colonies on the move.

Alan Deeley, a beekeeper in Warwickshire in England's West Midlands, said the weather of preceding months was also a likely factor. Honeybee populations were strengthened last year by a long, hot and dry summer, he said, and then a period of cold, wet springtime weather that dragged through April meant that many beekeepers did not inspect their hives as frequently, for fear of exposing their bees to the cold.

"They were getting constrained in the hive, and that is a trigger for them to swarm," Mr. Deeley said of the bees.

He said that he had received at least twice as many calls reporting swarms this year, and that beekeepers can sometimes stop a colony from swarming, including by increasing a hive's capacity.

The bees have been drawing plenty of notice.

In Lancaster, a city in northwestern England, one swarm gained attention last week when it took a break on a metal pole on a stretch of sidewalk outside a real-estate agency's office. (One commenter on a Facebook post pointing it out joked that they must have simply been browsing for a new home.)

On the island of Guernsey, a crown dependency in the English Channel, the swarms have been so numerous that Debbie Cox, the secretary of the local beekeepers association, recently ran out of the usual equipment and resorted to using a cardboard box to pick up a melon-size swarm that had nestled in a backyard apple tree.

"It's almost like the bees all over the country have all decided this year they're all going to swarm," she said, adding the group had already received about 30 calls this season, compared with half a dozen last season.

Although honeybees are docile rather than aggressive when swarming, beekeepers say that people should still keep their distance if they spot a sizable cluster.

The insects are pollinators that perform a crucial role for biodiversity and agriculture, and concerns over declines in honeybee populations arose last decade because of the effects of pesticides and destructive mites, along with factors like fungi and viruses. Other bee species, including bumblebees, have also experienced ecological threats.

But the number of globally managed honeybee colonies has increased in the past 50 years, according to a longitudinal study published in the journal Nature last year, and beekeeping has boomed as a hobby in many places. Some beekeepers in Britain speculated that an uptick in hobbyist beekeepers was a factor in the recent increase in swarms.

And given that it is the start of the usual season for honeybee swarming, Professor Ratnieks said that if there was a surge, it was no particular reason for concern. "It's just part of spring," he said, "like birds building their nest."

"If there is a lot of swarming, it really means the bees are doing well," he added.

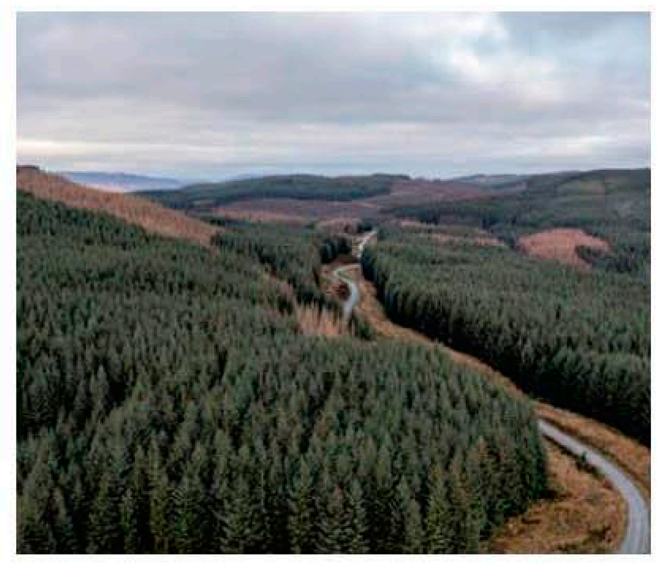


IAN CAMPBELL, VIA BRITISH BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATION

A swarm of bees on a farm in Northumberland. A pest controller in Shropshire said, "We're fully booked for the next four weeks."







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U.A.E. Says It Is Spurning Maritime Force Led by the U.S.

By VIVIAN NEREIM

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — The United Arab Emirates announced on Wednesday that it had stopped participating in a maritime security force led by the United States, the latest hint of tensions between Washington and key Persian Gulf allies who complain that America has not done enough to protect them from Iranian threats.

The unusual public statement came after Iran seized two commercial tankers in waterways near the Emirates in quick succession over the last two months. The Emirati Foreign Ministry said the country "withdrew its participation" from the Combined Maritime Forces two months ago "as a result of our ongoing evaluation of effective security cooperation with all partners."

Political analysts say the Emirati statement could be intended as a message to the United States that the country is displeased with the level of American protection for its allies in the Persian Gulf against threats from Iran and must look out for its own interests. Emirati and Saudi officials have repeatedly expressed frustration with U.S. policy toward Iran.

"They were unhappy with the Americans, and when the U.A.E. is not happy, they are very decisive," said Abdulkhaleq Abdulla, an Emirati political scientist.

Cmdr. Timothy Hawkins, a spokesman for the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet in Bahrain, said the Emirates remained a "partner" in the force even though it had suspended its participation.

"Regarding their level of participation as a partner, we leave it to our individual partners to speak to that," he said, adding that the Emirates "withdrew their participation for the moment in the task forces but not their overall membership."

Pulling back from the group does not leave the Emirates defenseless against Iran and other threats.

The headquarters of the Combined Maritime Forces are at the U.S. naval base in Bahrain. The group brings together more than 30 countries that operate in the waters of the Persian Gulf, Red Sea and Horn of Africa to protect the flow of commerce and deter illicit activity like piracy. Participation is voluntary.



JON GAMBRELL/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, who heads the Navy's Fifth Fleet, called Iran's seizure of foreign tankers "unacceptable."

In April, Iran seized an oil tanker chartered by Chevron as it traveled from Kuwait to Houston. Days later, Iranian speedboats surrounded an oil tanker after it had left Dubai, the biggest city in the Emirates and a global trade hub. The ship was forced to divert to Iranian territorial waters.

Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, the commander of U.S. naval forces in the region, said this month that American naval warships had increased their patrols through the Strait of Hormuz, the Persian Gulf's busy maritime passageway, in response to the moves by Iran.

"Iran's actions are unacceptable," he said in an interview.

Last week, however, Commodore Alireza Tangsiri, a naval commander in Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard Corps, lashed out in his own statement, saying that the United States "should not be present in our region."

"The security of the Persian Gulf is provided by Iran and the countries of the region, and there is no need for you or any other country to be present," he said.

Like their counterparts in other Persian Gulf countries, Emirati officials are trying to keep a delicate balance between deterring Iran and easing tensions with Iran.

Emirati officials have maintained open relations with Iran, exchanging visits between senior officials this year.

Yet, Iran-supported militias, including the Houthi rebels in Yemen, have repeatedly launched attacks on the Emirates and neighboring Saudi Arabia, including drone and missile assaults.

Eric Schmitt contributed reporting from Washington, Leily Nikounazar from Brussels and Ahmed Al Omran from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY SERGEY PONOMAREV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The drag queen performer Florence Konstantina Delight, at left with Rose before a show in Istanbul, said, "Because of the election, everyone was talking about us."

Erdogan's Win Heightens L.G.B.T.Q. Turks' Fears of Bias

From Page A1

feeling that no one in the country had their backs.

"People are scared and having dystopian thoughts like, 'Are we going to be slashed or violently attacked in the middle of the street?'" said Ogulcan Yediveren, a coordinator at SPoD, an L.G.B.T.Q. advocacy group in Istanbul. "What will happen is that people will hide their identities, and that is bad enough."

Turkey, a predominantly Muslim society with a secular state, does not criminalize homosexuality and has laws against discrimination. But in recent conversations, more than a dozen L.G.B.T.Q. people said they often struggled to find jobs, secure housing and get quality health care as well as to be accepted by their friends, relatives, neighbors and co-workers.

In recent years, they said, they have encountered new restrictions on their visibility in society. Universities have shut down L.G.B.T.Q. student clubs. And since 2014, the authorities have banned Pride parades in major cities, including in Istanbul, where crowds in the tens of thousands used to participate.

That tracks with Mr. Erdogan's vision for Turkey.

Since the start of his national political career in 2003, he has increased his own power while promoting a conservative Muslim view of society. He insists that marriage can only be between a man and a woman, and encourages women to have three children to build the nation.

Rights advocates say that as Mr. Erdogan has gained power, his conservative outlook has filtered down, encouraging local authorities to restrict L.G.B.T.Q. activities and pushing the security forces to crack down on gay rights activism.

Anti-L.G.B.T.Q. rhetoric was more prominent during this election than in past cycles, even though there are no looming legal changes that would expand or limit rights. No political party is trying to legalize same-sex marriage or adoption, for example, or expand medical care for transgender youth.

Instead, Mr. Erdogan and his allies use the issue to galvanize conservatives.

"What they want to impose on society in terms of other values is full of hatred and violence toward us," said Nazlican Dogan, 26, who is facing legal charges related to participation in pro-L.G.B.T.Q. protests at Bogazici University in Istanbul. "It was really ugly and it made us feel that we can't exist in this country, like I should just leave."

During his campaign, Mr. Erdogan characterized L.G.B.T.Q. people as a threat to society.

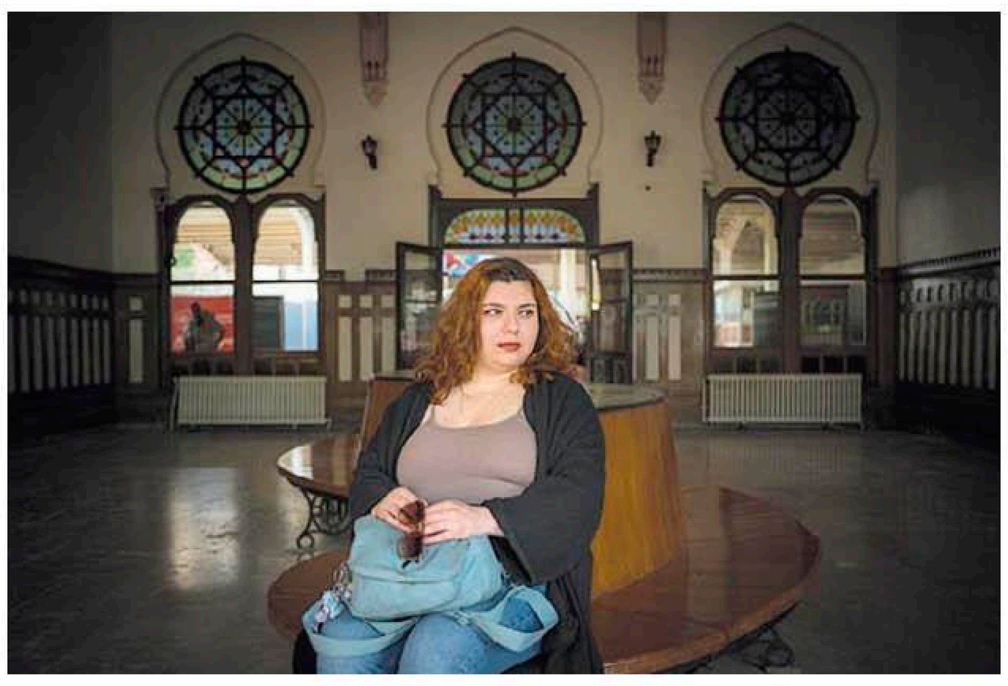
"If the concept of family is not strong, the destruction of the nation happens quickly," he told young people during a televised meeting in early May. "L.G.B.T. is a poison injected into the institution of the family. It is not possible for us to accept that poison as a country whose people are 99 percent Muslim."

In April, his interior minister, Suleyman Soylu, went even further, falsely claiming that gay rights would allow humans to marry animals.

SPoD, the advocacy group, asked parliamentary candidates during the campaign to sign a contract to protect L.G.B.T.Q. rights. Fifty-eight candidates signed, and 11 of them won seats in the 600-member legislature, said Mr. Yediveren, the coordinator.









Clockwise from top left: Members of the Pride planning committee, including Bambi Ceren, right, in an Istanbul apartment; activists spraying graffiti to promote Pride activities; Florence Konstantina Delight in performance; and Nazlican Dogan, a student who was prosecuted for displaying a rainbow flag. "People are scared," an L.G.B.T.Q. advocate said, adding, "People will hide their identities."

His group has also tried to expand legal protections for L.G.B.T.Q. people.

While certain laws prohibit discrimination, they do not specifically mention sexual identity or orientation, he said. At the same time, the authorities often cite vague concepts like "general morals" and "public order" to act against activities they don't like, such as Pride Week events.

"This week is very important because we don't have physical locations we can come together as a community to support each other," said Bambi Ceren, 34, a member of a committee planning events for this year's Pride Week, which begins on June 19.

Last year, the police prevented Pride events and arrested people who gathered to take part, committee members said.

SPoD runs a national hotline to field queries about sexual orientation, legal protections or how to access medical care or other services. The group can solve most issues related to services, Mr. Yediveren said, but most callers' problems are social and emotional.

"People are feeling very lonely and isolated," he said.

Transgender individuals struggle to find jobs, housing and proper medication and care. And gay men and lesbians are sometimes forced into heterosexual marriages and fear coming out to their families and co-workers.

Worrying about "'Will I be caught one day?' causes a lot of stress for them," Mr. Yediveren said.

And the threat of violence is real.

Some L.G.B.T.Q. people said they had been beaten by the security forces during protests or met with indifference from the police while being harassed on the street.

A survey last year by ILGA-Europe, a rights organization, ranked Turkey second-to-last out of 49 European countries on L.G.B.T.Q. rights. Another group, Transgender Europe, said that 62 transgender people had been killed in Turkey from 2008 to 2022.

Many L.G.B.T.Q. people fear that the demonization during the campaign will make that threat more acute.

A queer university student from Turkey's Kurdish minority, who grew up in a smaller city with no significant L.G.B.T.Q. presence, said she feared that bad days were ahead.

People who would not normally commit violence might feel empowered to do so because the government had spread hatred for people like her, she said, claiming they were sick, dangerous or a threat to the family. She spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of being attacked.

Despite the increased danger, many L.G.B.T.Q. people vowed to keep fighting for their rights and maintaining their visibility in society. To deal with the fear of random attacks, they plan to look out for each other more to ensure they are safe.

In Istanbul, a 25-year-old drag performer who goes by the stage name Florence Konstantina Delight and uses gender-neutral pronouns called the new attention unsettling.

"In the whole history of queer life in Turkey, we could never be that visible," they said in an interview. "But because of the election, everyone was talking about us."

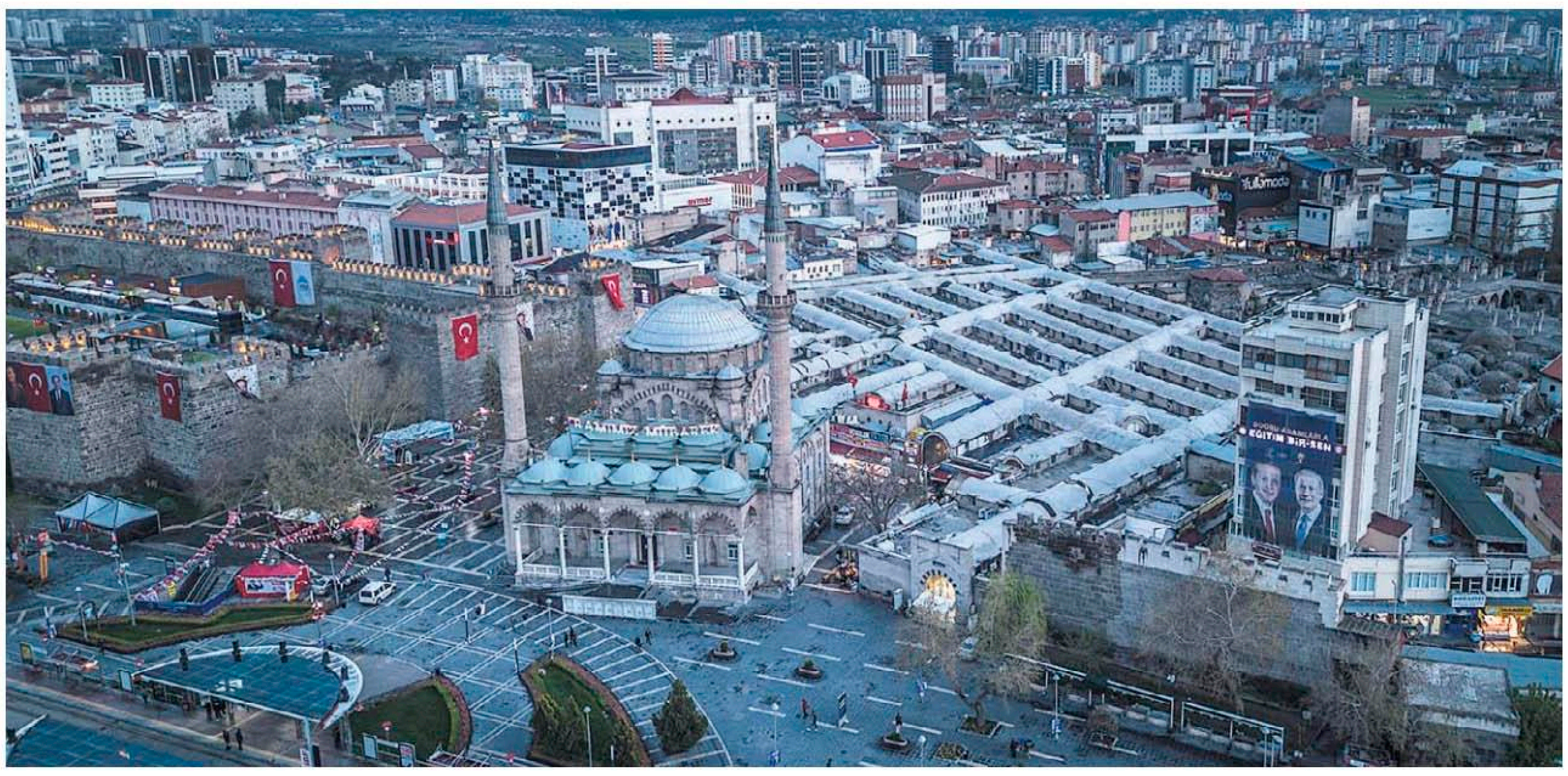
They described growing up in Turkey as "full of abuse, full of denial, full of teachers ignoring your existence and what happened to you, like your pals bullying you."

At age 16, Florence accepted their sexual identity, attended a Pride parade and set up a Facebook account with a fake name to contact L.G.B.T.Q. organizations and make friends, eventually stumbling upon someone at the same high school.

They later moved to Istanbul, where they perform weekly at a rare L.G.B.T.Q.-friendly bar.

Mr. Erdogan's win on Sunday caused Florence despair.

"I stared into space for a while," they said.



An aerial view of Kayseri, Turkey, in April with a central square, a mosque and a campaign sign for President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Seoul Awoke to Order, 'Prepare to Evacuate.' It Was a False Alarm.

This article is by **Choe Sang-Hun**, **Victoria Kim** *and* **Jin Yu Young**.

SEOUL — The emergency siren began wailing at 6:32 a.m. Several minutes later, personal cellphones around Seoul were screeching with a government alert urging residents to "prepare to evacuate," children and the old and weak first.

For a half an hour on Wednesday morning, confusion and panic swept across this city of 10 million as news spread that North Korea had fired a rocket. Then, the next wave of messages hit: The South's home ministry issued a notice saying the earlier alert was a "false alarm."

Anxiety soon turned into anger and exasperation.

"They messed up big time," said Lee Jae, an office worker in Seoul who woke up to the sirens.

South Koreans, who have grown inured to North Korea's frequent provocations, were met with a disturbing taste of how their country might respond to a major military attack on Wednesday when their government caused confusion with its public alert system at a time of heightened tension in the region.

The confusion began after North Korea launched a rocket from the northwestern tip of the Korean Peninsula at 6:27 a.m. For days, the North had told the world that it was preparing to launch a rocket that would carry a homegrown military spy satellite into orbit, despite the action violating multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Data the North had released on the rocket's preprogrammed trajectory showed that it would fly south, over the sea between the Korean Peninsula and China, and over the waters east of the Philippines.

It is rare for a North Korean projectile to fly to the south. In 2016, when a North Korean rocket carrying a satellite flew on a southbound trajectory, South Korea issued an alert on Baekryeongdo, an island near the northwestern border with the North.

Two minutes after the liftoff on Wednesday, South Korea issued a similar alert on Baekryeongdo, but officials were investigating why the same alert was also issued to Seoul, even though the rocket flew hundreds of kilometers west of the city.

After issuing the alert on Baekryeongdo, the home ministry left it to regional governments to decide whether to follow suit, according the Seoul city government. Officials in Seoul said they decided to issue an alert in the city as a precaution, even if they had to retract it. The mayor of Seoul later issued a public apology.

For Chung Sung-hee, 62, the confusing response was infuriating. Ms. Chung said she was preparing breakfast at her home in central Seoul when she heard the phone alert, followed by a loudspeaker broadcast. When she opened the window and trained her ears, all she could make out was that it was "a real situation," not a drill.

"They should've said what was happening, and where to go," Ms. Chung said. "Who would evacuate with a message like that?" When she got the second alert saying it was a false alarm, Ms. Chung said she couldn't help but curse the authorities.

"I blurted out, 'These crazies — isn't there one thing they can do right?'" she said. "The government should tell you, 'this is the situation.' If they out of nowhere just say 'evacuate,' what's anyone to do?"

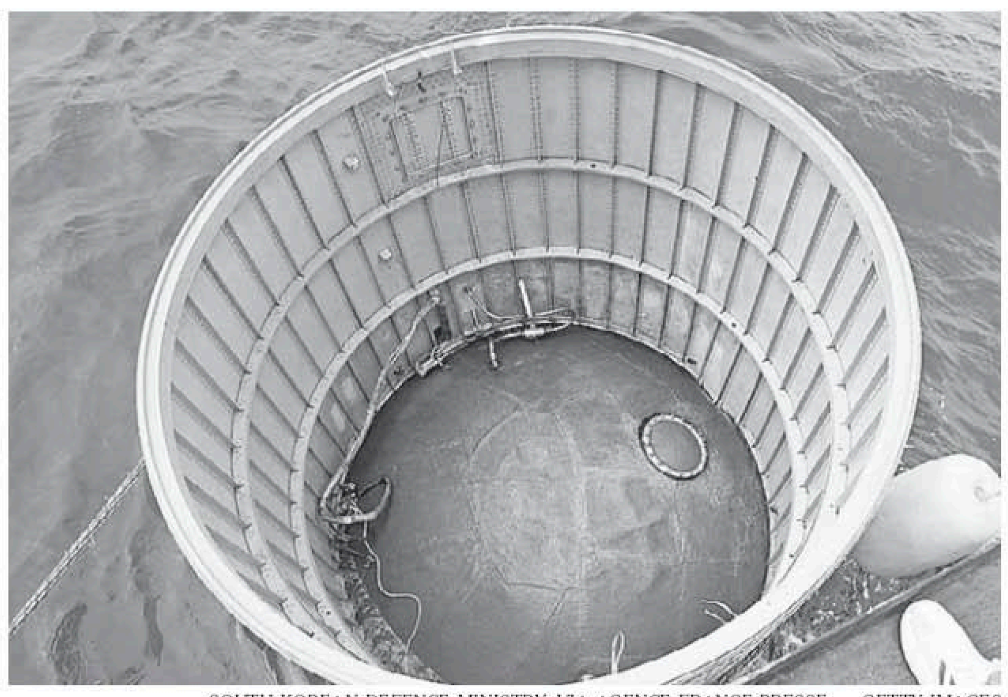
South Koreans harbor deep skepticism over their government's ability to handle disasters. The government of President Yoon Suk Yeol was widely accused of failing to prevent or respond quickly enough to the deadly crowd crush in Seoul that killed nearly 160 people in October.

Critics say that the response on Wednesday was symptomatic of an administration that has championed a tough stance against North Korea yet failed to assure the public of its safety amid the North's growing nuclear threat.

"It's right for the Yoon government to have a sense of crisis with North Korea," said Ahn Byong-jin, a political scientist at Kyung Hee University in Seoul. "But there has been little training for the general public on how to live with it. The commotion we had this morning encapsulates how the government is failing to understand and respond to this new normal with North Korea."



JUNG YEON-JE/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES



SOUTH KOREAN DEFENCE MINISTRY, VIA AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un, on a TV screen at the Seoul Railway Station. A North Korean satellite launch prompted Seoul officials to sound an early morning alarm, to the chagrin of many. Left, a part salvaged by South Korea after the launch.

Min Yun-geun, a college student in Seoul, feared that false alarms, if repeated, might desensitize people to actual emergencies. "I'm realizing how we are actually not so prepared for war," he said.

Mr. Yoon's office condemned the North's rocket launch as a "grave provocation," calling it a long-range missile test disguised as a satellite launch.

North Korea confirmed that the launch had failed and that the projectile had tumbled into the sea west of the Korean Peninsula after its second-stage vehicle malfunctioned. The country vowed to schedule another launch as soon as possible. South Korea was collecting debris to glean clues about the North's rocket technology.

By launching a rocket toward the south and attempting to place a military spy satellite into orbit, the North was escalating its nuclear threat, said Lee Byong-chul, a researcher on nuclear policy at the Institute for Far Eastern Studies at Kyungnam University in Seoul.

"North Korea has already shown that its missiles are powerful enough to fly the distances it wanted, but what it lacks is an ability to guide them to targets with precision," Mr. Lee said. "Military spy satellites can help provide the North with that capability."

Though some were frustrated by the South Korean government's response to the launch, others said they would rather have officials err on the side of caution in such situations. "It's better that they did it and get chewed out than not doing anything and getting chewed out," said Lee Jae-hee, 45.

After he saw the alert, Mr. Lee said he saw a news report that it was about the space launch the North had warned it would conduct and fell back asleep. "If you're hearing buildings blow up and things roaring, it's probably too late to go anywhere anyway," he said with a shrug.

South Korea regularly conducted civil defense drills during the Cold War, with sirens wailing and megaphones urging people to take shelter in subway stations, underground parking lots and basements of large buildings. Streets were vacated of traffic.

The country now has thousands of underground shelters for emergencies.

But those drills have become a distant memory for many across the country, particularly after Seoul began to engage in more diplomacy with North Korea under Mr. Yoon's predecessor, Moon Jae-in. South Korea last conducted an air-raid drill in 2017.

As tensions in the region rise, Mr. Yoon's government has been slow to reintroduce civil defense drills. On May 16, South Korea conducted its first nationwide civil defense exercise in six years, but it was limited to public servants and schoolchildren.

Jeung Yeon-cheon, 36, who lives on the 18th floor of an apartment building in Seoul, said he participated in the May training, though he thought that any risk of a North Korean attack felt remote. He quickly dismissed the alarm on Wednesday as a blip.

"It didn't feel that serious," he said.

Leftists Convicted in Attacks on Far Right

By CHRISTOPHER F. SCHUETZE

DRESDEN, Germany — A German court on Wednesday convicted a 28-year-old woman and three accomplices of organizing and carrying out brutal attacks against people they perceived to be neo-Nazis, in what experts have described as an uncommon case of left-wing extremist violence in the country.

The woman, who in accordance with Germany's strict privacy laws was identified only as Lina E., was sentenced to five years and three months in prison by a court in Dresden for membership in a criminal association, several counts of assault, causing damage to property, as well as other lesser charges.

Three other members of the group — Lennart A., 28; Jannis R., 37; and Philipp M., 28 — received prison sentences ranging from two years and five months to three years and two months for charges including membership or support of a criminal gang, assault and abetting assault.

Nancy Faeser, the country's interior minister, said in a statement after the verdict that "in a democratic constitutional state, there must be no room for vigilante justice." She added, "No objective justifies political violence."

The judge, Hans Schlüter-Staats, announced that Lina E. would be released from jail until possible appeals were played out and she had to start her prison sentence. Supporters in the courtroom, who had protested so loudly when the initial sentence was announced that the judge called a 15-minute recess, rejoiced that she would be free for a time. The three co-defendants were not in custody during the trial.

Hours after the verdict was announced, there were clashes, some violent, between left-wing protesters and the police in Berlin; Leipzig, where Lina E. lived; and other cities. Far-left activists also had announced that demonstrations would be held in Leipzig on Saturday.

The case has been widely watched in Germany, where the authorities have long been accused of failing to prosecute or slow-walking the prosecution of figures tied to right-wing attacks, and especially in the east of the country, where the dominance of far-right groups has long overshadowed a smaller and apparently also violence-prone far-left scene. The trial also forced progressives to consider how far the fight against right-wing extremism should go, experts say.

At the heart of the case were six attacks that prosecutors said the loose, nameless group had planned and carried out from 2018 to 2020. Among those beaten by the masked attackers was a right-wing extremist and martial-arts fighter who himself is in jail awaiting trial for his role leading a violent right-wing group; men returning from a far-right rally in Dresden; and a man wearing a hat from a right-wing clothing company, who later denied being a neo-Nazi.

Some of the victims ended up in the hospital with broken bones. One testified that he was traumatized for life. There were 13 known victims in all, prosecutors said.

Prosecutors said that Lina E. had led the group with her partner, who is still wanted by the authorities.

Investigators homed in on Lina E., who was then a student, after a second attack on the extremist martial-arts fighter in 2019. After the attack, the police stopped a speeding VW Golf with stolen plates; inside, they found the original plates, which were registered to Lina E.'s mother. From there, the police connected Lina E. to other attacks through witness testimony, video, DNA evidence and a photo of a crime scene found in a camera at her home.

She was arrested in November 2020 at her home in Leipzig, in Saxony State in northeastern Germany. She was charged with causing bodily harm and organizing a criminal gang.

The case had captured the public's imagination ever since she stepped off a police helicopter surrounded by heavily armed officers for her arraignment in Karlsruhe, the seat of Germany's national prosecutors. She was vilified as a violent criminal by some and celebrated as a vigilante by others. "Free Lina E." graffiti popped up in the one neighborhood of Leipzig. Some stores put out collection boxes to help her with defense costs.

Hajo Funke, an expert on the far right, said the violence the left-wing group was accused of was unusual in eastern Germany, where the far right tended to be the source of brutality in public spaces.

"Especially in Saxony, but also in other states in the east, the far right has a tactical dominance against left-wing actors and even democratic-minded citizens in daily situations," Mr. Funke said. "If you are active doing something they don't like, you are actually in danger."

In 2022, the German police attributed 23,493 registered crimes to the far right in the country. In the same year, 6,976 crimes were attributed to the far left, the lowest number in a decade.

Germany has strict laws to fight fascism, banning Nazi symbols and speech. Shortly after the country's reunification three decades ago, neo-Nazis unleashed a wave of violence on migrants, targeting asylum centers, especially in the east. Although the violence has subsided, the political fortunes of the right have grown. Last year, a far-right group was accused of plotting to overthrow the government.

A parliamentary committee report published in 2013 found that Germany's police and security services had deeply rooted prejudices that had allowed a neo-Nazi cell to carry out violent attacks — killings, robberies and bombings — against immigrants for more than a decade without being detected.

The trial of Lina E. and her group unfolded over nearly 100 days in Saxony State under high security. Her supporters flooded the visitors' gallery and cheered when she entered. She greeted them with a heart symbol or a hug gesture.

The prosecutors' star witness was a kindergarten teacher and former associate of the group, Johannes D., 30, who confirmed that Lina E. had played a leadership role. He testified about the group's training and organization, and admitted being present for at least one attack as a stakeout. (A court gave him a suspended sentence for his part in the crime.)

On the final day of the trial last month, Lina. E. did not insist on her innocence or explain her motives, but thanked her family and those who had written to her and visited her in jail.

Even amid calls for protests, Alexander Deycke, who studies the far left at the University of Göttingen, said that within the left-wing community, the verdict might lead to soul-searching. "It's a fundamental contradiction when you want a violence-free, domination-free society on the one hand, but you are unwilling to exclude violence on the way to getting there," he said.

Dirk Münster, a police officer who runs the state's special unit on far-left crimes and oversaw the investigation of Lina E.'s group, said he believed that a clear guilty verdict was important in this case.

"We are not fighting against left-wing beliefs," he said. "We are working against actual criminal violence."

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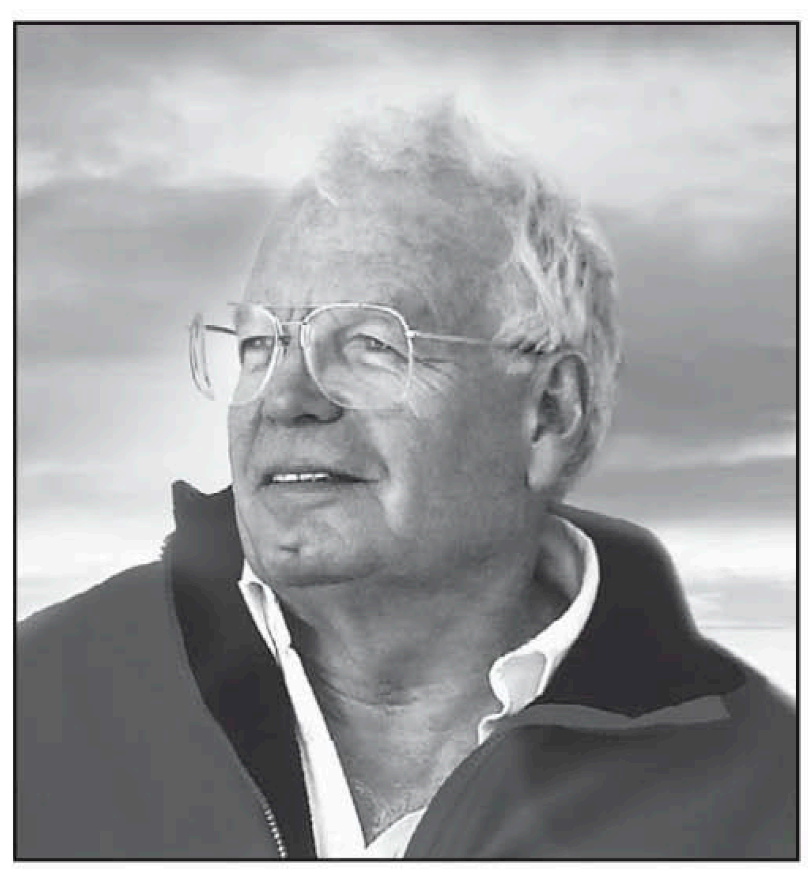


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War in Ukraine

Russia Denounces West's Refusal to Condemn Drone Strike on Moscow

By ANATOLY KURMANAEV

A day after a drone strike on Moscow, Kremlin officials jumped on the refusal of Ukrainian allies to denounce the attack as proof that Russia's real war was with the West.

The Kremlin's spokesman, Dmitri S. Peskov, said Russia "would have preferred to hear at least some words of condemnation" from Western capitals.

"We will calmly and deliberately think how to deal with this," he said.

While none of Ukraine's allies went so far as to endorse the drone attack, Britain's foreign secretary said on Tuesday that Kyiv had "the right to project force beyond its borders."

The U.S. response was more circumspect, but it stopped short of criticizing the first military strike to hit civilian areas in the Russian capital since the start of the war. Ukraine officials have said they were not "directly involved" in the drone strike.

From the outset of the conflict, Russia has portrayed the invasion of Ukraine as a defensive war provoked by the West, and on Wednesday it seized on the attack.

Dmitri A. Medvedev, the deputy head of Russia's national security council and a former president, said Britain "de facto is leading an undeclared war against Russia" by providing Ukraine with military aid and called it "our eternal enemy."

Known since the war began for staking out extreme positions, Mr. Medvedev argued that now any British official "can be considered as a legitimate military target."

The Russian ambassador in Washington, Anatoly Antonov, called the U.S. refusal to condemn the attack "an encouragement for Ukrainian terrorists," his embassy said on the Telegram messaging app.

Russia has repeatedly hit civilian areas of Ukraine over the course of the war, though it has denied targeting nonmilitary sites. And in recent weeks it has turned up the barrage of missiles and attack drones aimed at Kyiv, the capital. Thousands of Ukrainian civilians, including children, have been killed in Russian airstrikes and artillery bombardments, U.N. officials say.

Though the drone strike on Tuesday was unusual, it was not the first one on Russian soil since the war began. Drones have hit military air bases deep inside Russia, as well as an oil facility near an airfield in the province of Kursk. And last month, drones exploded over the Kremlin.

The incursions continued on Wednesday, when, the Russian authorities said, Ukrainian drones attacked two oil refineries in the region of Krasnodar. They also said that four people had been injured by shelling in the border region of Belgorod.



KIRILL KUDRYAVTSEV/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

Inspecting the facade of an apartment building that was reportedly damaged in a drone attack in Moscow on Tuesday.

Russia has long accused the West of waging a proxy war against it. Those claims grew louder last month after a group of Ukraine-based Russian paramilitary members staged a multiday raid in Russia's Belgorod border region — apparently with U.S. armored vehicles.

A New York Times analysis found that at least three of what appeared to be American-made MRAPs had been part of the attack. A leader of one of the groups claimed the weapons had not been provided by the Ukrainian military.

Russian officials have said that NATO's decision to send weapons, which have become increasingly advanced as the war has worn on, raises the risk of a direct confrontation and a potential nuclear war.

On Tuesday, President Vladimir V. Putin also made an oblique reference to this threat, calling the drone strike on Moscow an attempt "to create a response reaction from Russia." He accused unspecified forces of trying to sabotage a Ukrainian nuclear plant occupied by Russia or to use "a type of a dirty bomb related to the nuclear industry."

Although Western governments initially focused their military support for Ukraine on bolstering its defenses, over time, the desire to hasten an end the war has led to growing deliveries of offensive weapons to Kyiv.

Tensions between Moscow and Western capitals have worsened since the invasion, as have the economic sanctions imposed on Russia as penalty.

At a security conference on Wednesday in Slovakia, France's president, Emmanuel Macron, said that Western allies must give Ukraine "tangible and credible" security guarantees in its battle against Russia.

"If we want a credible, durable peace, if we want to hold our own against Russia, if we want to be credible with the Ukrainians, we must give Ukraine the means to prevent any new aggression and to include Ukraine in any new security architecture," he said in a speech.

Mr. Macron was criticized early in the war over his insistence on not antagonizing Russia, but his approach toward Mr. Putin has hardened. He also expressed regret that France and other Western European countries had failed to heed warnings from countries on the European Union's eastern edge about Russian belligerence.

On Wednesday, Germany said it had ordered four of the five Russian Consulates in the country to close after Moscow limited the number of German diplomatic staff allowed in Russia, the latest in an escalating tit-for-tat diplomatic dispute between the two countries.

The Russian Foreign Ministry was told to start shutting down its consulates in Germany immediately and to finish by the end of the year, said Christofer Burger, a spokesman for Germany's Foreign Ministry.

One Russian Consulate and the Russian Embassy in Berlin will be allowed to remain open.

Ukraine officials say they were not 'directly involved' in the strike.

In Sweden, the U.S. secretary of state, Antony J. Blinken met with European officials on Wednesday to discuss trade and technology issues, cracking down on exports that could aid Russia.

On Thursday, Mr. Blinken is scheduled to meet with NATO foreign ministers to discuss the alliance summit planned for July, as well as the war in Ukraine and the prospects for Swedish membership in the alliance.

Christopher F. Schuetze, Michael Crowley and Aurelien Breeden contributed reporting.

Blinken Tours NATO's North as Risks Loom Large in Arctic Region

By STEVEN ERLANGER

BERLIN — As polar ice melts, Russia, already a major Arctic power, wants to make the region its own. China has ambitions for a "Polar Silk Road." And NATO is embracing Finland — and Sweden too, Washington hopes — giving the alliance new reach in the Far North.

Climate change is accelerating and amplifying competition in the Arctic as never before, opening the region to greater commercial and strategic jostling just at a moment when Russia, China and the West are all seeking to expand their military presence there.

The rising importance of the region is underscored by the travels of Antony J. Blinken, the U.S. secretary of state, who will attend an informal meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Norway on Thursday.

Mr. Blinken is making a point of visiting Sweden and Finland as well, meeting the leaders of all three countries as they press Turkey to ratify Sweden's quick entry into NATO. He is scheduled to deliver a major speech on Russia, Ukraine and NATO on Friday in Helsinki, the capital of NATO's newest member.

For a long time, countries were reluctant to discuss the Arctic as a possible military zone. But that is quickly changing.

Russian aggression plus climate change make "a perfect storm," said Matti Pesu, an analyst at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs. There is a new Cold War atmosphere, mixed with melting ice, which affects military planning and opens up new economic possibilities and access to natural resources.

"So all these are connected and are magnifying each other," Mr. Pesu said. "It makes the region intriguing."

While NATO has been cheered by Russia's difficulties in Ukraine, the alliance in fact has significant vulnerabilities in the north.

Russia remains a vast Arctic power, with naval bases and nuclear missiles stationed in the Far North but also along Russia's western edge: in the Kola Peninsula, near Norway, where Russia keeps most of its nuclear-armed submarines, and in Kaliningrad, bordered by Poland and Lithuania.

With climate change, shipping routes are becoming less icebound and easier to navigate, making the Arctic more accessible and attractive for competitive commercial exploitation, as well as military adventurism.

Russia has said it wants to make the Arctic its own — a fifth military district, on a par with its other four — said Robert Dalsjo, research director at the Swedish Defense Research Agency.

China has also been busy trying to establish itself in the region and use new unfrozen routes, one reason the NATO considers China a significant security challenge.

In its most recent strategy paper, adopted last summer in Madrid, NATO declared Russia to be "the most significant and direct threat to allies' security and to peace and stability," but for the first time addressed China, saying that its "stated ambitions and coercive policies challenge our interests, security and values."

How to create a "northern bubble" to deter Russia and monitor China is one of NATO's newest and biggest challenges.

In response to NATO's enlargement, "Russia is putting increasing emphasis on the Arctic, where they're stronger and less surrounded by NATO," said Mr. Pesu of the Finnish Institute. Russia may have drawn down its troops to fight in Ukraine, but retains its air power, northern fleet, nuclear submarines and nuclear-armed missiles in the northern realms.

"So it remains a pretty urgent concern," he said. Finland, Sweden and Norway "see this most urgently," even if some in NATO do not, he said. As a consequence, Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark have decided to merge their air forces, creating one with more planes than either Britain or France.

Until now, competition in the region was largely mediated through the Arctic Council, founded in 1996, which includes Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States, and promotes research and cooperation.

But it does not have a security component, and soon all members but Russia will be NATO members. The council has been "paused" since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. When Russia's chairmanship ended in May, Norway took over, so activity may pick up again.



EMILE DUCKE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The missile cruiser Peter the Great, part of the Russian Navy's northern fleet, at its Arctic base in Severomorsk in 2021. Russia, China and the West are all seeking to expand their military presence in the Arctic. Climate change adds volatility to the region.



THE NEW YORK TIMES

Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 caused rethinking throughout NATO, and there was new anxiety about the Baltic States — Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — combined with submarine hunts in Sweden and more serious war gaming, said Anna Wieslander, the director for Northern Europe at the Atlantic Council, a Washington-based research institution.

Gen. Philip M. Breedlove, then the supreme allied commander Europe, called for "an anti-access area denial" — to deny Russia entry to the Baltic Sea from Kaliningrad, the isolated Russian toehold with access to the sea.

China started making inroads around 2018, trying to buy ports in Finland and mines in Greenland, opening scientific research stations as it pursues its "Polar Silk Road," Ms. Wieslander said, prompting former President Trump to offer to buy Greenland.

Washington started reinvesting militarily in the Arctic then with more ships, planes and military exercises, as did other NATO countries in the region. In 2018 NATO went so far as to set up a new operational command — a kind of regional headquarters that plans and conducts military operations to defend specific areas of NATO. The new command, based in Norfolk, Va., is navy-focused and defends the Atlantic sea routes, Scandinavia and the Arctic.

There remains a concern that China, which now has even closer ties to Russia, remains active in the Far North, building big icebreakers. "China will reach Europe through the Arctic," Ms. Wieslander said.

One main question is whether the real Russian threat to Scandinavia will come from the sea, as Norway fears, or from the land, with a possible Russian invasion of the Baltic States or Finland, then a move westward.

Both Finland and Sweden, when it joins, want to be part of the same NATO operational command, given their long history of defense cooperation.

Norway belongs to the Norfolk command, and there is a logic to making both Finland and Sweden part of that command, since reinforcements would likely come from the West, across the Atlantic.

But there is perhaps more logic, given the current threat from Russia, for them to join the land-oriented command based in Brunssum, the Netherlands, which is charged with defending Central and Eastern Europe, including Poland and the Baltic nations.

"There is logic for both," said Niklas Granholm, deputy director of studies at the Swedish Defense Research Agency. "It's not yet resolved."

According to the Helsingin Sanomat newspaper, NATO is recommending putting both countries in the Brunssum command, despite Finland's early interest in being part of Norfolk, which Sauli Niinisto, Finland's president, visited in March.

That's because it is easier for Finland to be reinforced from Norway and Sweden, Mr. Pesu, the Finnish Institute analyst, noted.

The fear is that a modernized Russian Northern Fleet could swing down through the straits between Greenland, Iceland and Britain, a move known in NATO as a "red right hook," to cut sea lanes and underwater cables and threaten the American East Coast with cruise missiles.



Antony J. Blinken urged Turkey to drop its objections to Sweden joining NATO.

Mr. Dalsjo of the Swedish Defense Research Agency, calling himself a heretic, cautions in a recent paper that this threat is real but may be overblown, especially after Russia's losses in Ukraine.

Russia is predominantly a land power, and its northern fleet is considerably smaller than it was during the Cold War, when there were worries about the kind of major Soviet naval attack depicted in the Tom Clancy novel "Red Storm Rising."

"If they didn't do it then with 150 ships," Mr. Dalsjo asked, "why would they do it now with 20?"

Biden Fortifies Kyiv's Offensive With New Aid Of $300 Million

By HELENE COOPER

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration on Wednesday announced $300 million in military aid for Ukraine, the latest package of weapons and other military equipment that the United States has been sending to Kyiv since the beginning of Russia's invasion.

The package includes additional ammunition for drones and long-range artillery. It includes additional munitions for Patriot air defense systems, as well as munitions for other air defense systems, including Stingers, Avengers and Aim-7 systems, the Pentagon said in a statement, as Kyiv gears up for its long-anticipated offensive to try to push Russian forces back and defend against aerial attacks from Moscow.

The aid also includes other artillery support, anti-armor weaponry and tens of millions of rounds of small-arms ammunition, defense officials said.

Moscow came under a drone attack on Tuesday, a move the Kremlin has blamed on Kyiv. A senior Ukrainian official said Kyiv was not "directly involved" in the assault, though it was "happy" to watch.

So far American officials say that no U.S.-made drones or munition have been used in attacks on Moscow. But the fact that the United States plans to send additional ammunition for Ukrainian drones shows how serious the Biden administration is about arming Ukraine in advance of the counteroffensive, a Pentagon official said on Wednesday. The air defense munitions in the shipment also suggest that the United States is seeking to give Ukraine an advantage amid continuing strikes from Moscow.

The Pentagon did not specify which unmanned systems were being bolstered with the drone munitions in the aid package. The United States has given Ukraine both surveillance and attack drones in the past year, but officials have been reluctant to publicly describe exactly which systems have been sent.

The package brings the amount of security assistance to Ukraine from the United States since Russia invaded in February last year to $37.6 billion, the Pentagon said.

"This authorization is the Biden administration's 39th drawdown of equipment from D.O.D. inventories for Ukraine since August 2021," the Pentagon statement said, referring to the Defense Department's supplies. "It includes key capabilities to support Ukraine's air defenders as they bravely protect Ukraine's soldiers, civilians, and critical infrastructure amid Russia's continuing airstrikes killing civilians across Ukraine."

John F. Kirby, a White House spokesman, said Wednesday that the administration would keep up the weapons shipments through the rest of the fiscal year, which ends in the fall.

As for when the administration would need to go to Congress for more money for Ukraine, Mr. Kirby said that "we've got some time to figure that out."

Michael D. Shear contributed reporting.

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Protest by Olympians Exposes India's Dwindling Tolerance for Dissent

This article is by ***Mujib Mashal, Hari Kumar*** *and* ***Sameer Yasir.***

The Olympic wrestlers arrived on the banks of the sacred river Ganges late on Tuesday for what they had announced as a final act of desperation.

Two days before, the police had violently dismantled their protest camp in New Delhi and dragged them off to detention, striking a blow against their protracted effort to bring to account a politically powerful sports official they accuse of serial sexual harassment of female wrestlers.

Now, the athletes would throw their hard-earned medals, including two Olympic bronzes for a large nation curiously bereft of global sporting laurels, into the river and then begin a hunger strike.

"These medals decorating our necks no longer mean anything," they said in a statement, adding that the authorities were "going after the victims" to force them to end their protest. "What is the point of life when you compromise on dignity?" the statement read.

The wrestlers, sobbing on the crowded riverbank, stopped short of discarding their medals at the end of two hours of high drama, as community leaders stepped in to ask them to give their pleas five more days. But their desperate act, after they were forced out of New Delhi's main protest site, laid bare the shrinking space for protest in India's capital nearly a decade into Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rule.

Activists, analysts and opposition politicians describe a pattern as Mr. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, or B.J.P., has grown increasingly allergic to dissent.

The party uses its majority in Parliament to disrupt any debate over uncomfortable issues. It deploys the police in New Delhi, which is under the control of India's powerful home minister, to derail or prevent protests over those issues.

And, as equally powerful leverage, it unleashes a national broadcast media cowed to its interests, as well as an army of trolls and social media influencers, to demonize anyone who questions it.

In such an environment, the female wrestlers have learned how lonely and draining the process of justice remains for women when they face the wall of political power. Laws have been amended and reforms promised in recent years after brutal cases of violence and abuse against women, yet cases like the wrestlers' demonstrate how misogyny remains deeply ingrained in the structures of power, advocates say.

Their plight could have wider demoralizing ramifications as India faces a dire need to tap into its widely underutilized female work force in its quest to become a major power.

Mr. Modi once celebrated these wrestlers, who rose to celebrity by beating the odds in a particularly male-dominated part of the country. But now that they have accused the chief of the country's wrestling federation, a six-term lawmaker of the B.J.P., of sexual harassment and abuse, they have been met by what they call a political cover-up.



ARUN THAKUR/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

The Indian Olympic wrestler Vinesh Phogat, center, and others in a clash with the police on Sunday during a protest in New Delhi.



SANJEEV VERMA/HINDUSTAN TIMES, VIA GETTY

The athletes accuse a wrestling official, Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, above, of sexual wrongdoing. He is a member of the party of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, speaking at right.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

The protesting wrestlers — Sakshi Malik and Vinesh Phogat, along with a male wrestler, Bajrang Punia — say that the wrestling chief, Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, 66, sexually harassed at least seven young women, one of whom was a minor, over the course of a decade, starting in 2012.

Mr. Singh has rejected the claims. "If a single allegation against me is proven, I will hang myself," he said on Wednesday.

Officials in Mr. Modi's party have tried to frame the accusations as a conspiracy cooked up by the political opposition less than a year before a national election, while saying the wrestlers should trust the sports authorities and the police to carry out an investigation.

The wrestlers say they have reasons not to trust the police. It took pressure from India's Supreme Court to get the Delhi police to finally register a case against Mr. Singh. And while the Delhi police in other cases have been quick to arrest people on far less serious charges, Mr. Singh remains a free man, despite a strict law for the protection of minors that requires an arrest as proceedings continue.

As further cause for their distrust, the wrestlers cite the events of Sunday, when Mr. Singh attended the grand inauguration of a new Parliament building by Mr. Modi and posted pictures of him inside. That same day, the police tore down the wrestlers' protest encampment, detained them and charged them with disrupting public order.

It was this final act — which United World Wrestling, the sport's governing body, condemned in a statement that also expressed "disappointment over the lack of results of the investigations" — that led them to the river.

Protests in the capital have increasingly been relegated to a small designated site called Jantar Mantar. There, too, permission is required from a police force that has been accused by lawyers and activists of abusing "prohibitory orders" to prevent assemblies of dissenting groups while looking away when government supporters rally, at times even without permission.

Kavita Krishnan, a feminist activist, said she had seen a drastic shrinking of physical space for protest in the capital in recent years.

The previous coalition government headed by the Indian National Congress Party also tried to disrupt protests, particularly after a horrific gang rape case that shook India in 2012. But she and other activists were still able to hold regular protests, large and small, she said.

"We were not just picked up and carried off wholesale and prevented from having a demonstration at all," she said.

"Jantar Mantar is the designated spot for protest, and the wrestlers are not allowed to continue their protest even there," she said. "Even if at the designated places you can't protest over a sustained length of time, where do you go?"

Suman Nalwa, a spokeswoman for the Delhi police, rejected suggestions that the police abuse laws to prevent assembly. She said Delhi continues to host frequent protests, particularly in Jantar Mantar.

"There are certain areas in New Delhi district because of security and law-and-order issues as well as traffic issues — they are out of bound for any kind of protest by anybody, irrespective of their political or ideological affiliations," she said.

When villagers and farmer groups announced that they would join the wrestlers at the protest site, more barricades were installed — some even welded to the road — while many of the groups were stopped at the city's gates. After the camp was dismantled, the police put up large posters declaring that any assembly in the area was unlawful without prior permission.

On the banks of the Ganges in Haridwar late Tuesday, the wrestlers sat in a huddle as a large crowd of supporters and cameras surrounded them. Thousands were gathered for the evening sunset prayer.

Ms. Malik, the winner of an Olympic bronze and several other international medals, tightly hugged what her fellow protesters said was a box of her accolades and citations.

Around 7:30 p.m., a group of elderly farmer leaders arrived and pushed their way into the huddle for a meeting. When it became clear that they had persuaded the wrestlers not to throw their medals into the river, and to give the government five more days, a nearly comic quest ensued among protesters: Where were the medals? (The farmer leaders said they had taken the medals to protect them.)

"Who will send their daughters to play the sport when these kind of jackals are roaming around?" said Suhdir Kumar, a father of three, including one daughter, who was supporting the wrestlers' protest.

"They are doing the right thing," he said of the wrestlers. "At least they are opening the eyes of others."

Pakistan's Courts Emerge As Discrete Political Force And Challenger to Military

By CHRISTINA GOLDBAUM and SALMAN MASOOD

For most of Pakistan's eight-decade history, its courts were largely aligned with the country's powerful military. They gave three coups a legal stamp of approval, disqualified dozens of politicians who had fallen out of favor with the generals, and turned a blind eye to the disappearances of political dissidents.

But with Pakistan in the grip of a political crisis that has sparked violent protests across the country, the judiciary has openly contradicted the military and emerged as a political force in its own right, analysts say. In recent months, as former Prime Minister Imran Khan has clashed with the military and current civilian government, the courts have issued ruling after ruling that have thwarted what many consider attempts by the military to sideline Mr. Khan from politics.

That defiance was highlighted last month, when shortly after the authorities arrested Mr. Khan in a corruption inquiry, the courts declared his arrest unlawful, ordered his release and granted him bail.

It is a striking shift in Pakistan, where the military has long acted as the country's ultimate political power broker: Directly ruling for over half of the country's existence and acting as the veiled power behind civilian governments. And as the courts strike out on their own, they are injecting even more uncertainty into an already volatile political climate.

"So much of politics is about the military," said Yasser Kureshi, a lecturer in South Asian studies at Oxford University. "Now that the court is a center of power in its own right, the court has worked out its ability to manipulate and mold politics in its interests."

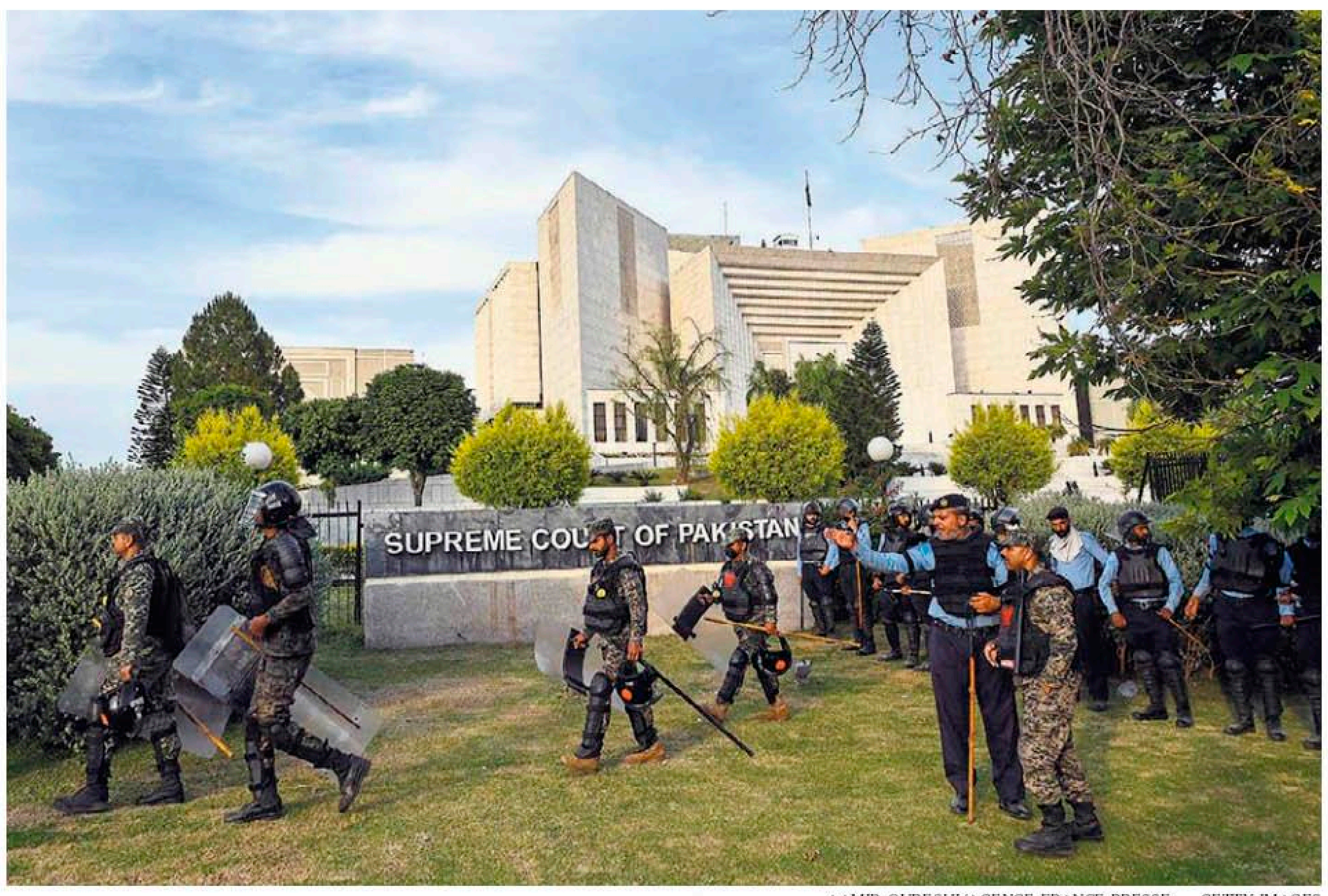
Analysts say the courts' recent decisions, which effectively bolstered Mr. Khan's political prospects, were as much a reflection of the judiciary's budding political muscle as the military's battered image.

Since Mr. Khan was ousted in a parliamentary no-confidence vote last year, he has railed vehemently at the generals and accused them of conspiring against him. His supporters have followed suit, disparaging military leaders on social media and recently storming military installations — once unimaginable scenes in a country where few have dared defy the security establishment.

Still, observers have cautioned against hailing the courts' recent rulings as a shift to more independent or democratic politics in Pakistan. Many critics say that rather than acting as a more independent body looking to curb the military's meddling, the courts are themselves enmeshed in politics, with some judges harboring deep loyalty to Mr. Khan.

"For the judiciary, there is this tinge of independence now that they are able to sustain some pressure from the establishment," said Ali Qasmi, a lecturer at the Lahore University of Management Sciences. "At the same time there is a clear kind of pro-Imran Khan tendency within the courts as well."

Senior judges in Pakistan play a substantial role in judicial appointments. The chief justice of the Supreme Court leads a commission that nominates judges for the top and high courts, who are then confirmed by a parliamentary committee. The mandatory retirement age is 65 for Supreme Court judges, and 62 for those in the high courts.



AAMIR QURESHI/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

Guarding the Supreme Court building in Islamabad in May while former Prime Minister Imran Khan was there.

While the judiciary's power does not come close to rivaling that of the military, in recent weeks military leaders have responded forcefully to tip the scales back in their favor and signal their ultimate dominance.

Last week, military officials announced that protesters who attacked military installations in response to Mr. Khan's arrest would be tried in military — not civilian — courts. Several prominent leaders from Mr. Khan's party have also been arrested by the police shortly after being granted bail. The moves, many observers say, were a military effort to intimidate Mr. Khan's supporters and show that the courts alone cannot protect them.

For much of Pakistan's turbulent history, the country's judiciary was seen as a junior partner of the military, a tool used to legitimize its more direct forays into the political sphere. It offered legal justification when military generals seized power from civilian governments in 1958, then in 1977 and again in 1999. They also provided legal cover in the 1990s when the military dismissed two governments, both led by former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

In the following decade, when a chief justice of the Supreme Court began to challenge the state's use of power, the country's military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, suspended the justice. The move caused uproar across the country and sparked a nationwide movement in support of the justice, who was eventually reinstated.

What one analyst calls a 'pro-Imran Khan tendency.'

The interests of the courts and the military then seemed to coincide. Empowered by the notion of defending the public's interests, the courts set out to root out the entrenched corruption among Pakistan's political dynasties — just as those very dynasties were falling out with military leaders. In doing so, the courts also helped pave the way for Mr. Khan — the former cricket star who campaigned as an anti-corruption crusader and was embraced by the military — to win the election in 2018.

"Two things were happening in parallel: The first was the court was more empowered" after the nationwide movement to reinstate the ousted chief justice, said Saroop Ijaz, a senior counsel at Human Rights Watch, the international watchdog group. "And the second is the military realized an empowered court was a great partner to influence political outcomes, to send prime ministers home without a direct military intervention."

But while military leaders appeared to withdraw their support for Mr. Khan early last year, many in the judiciary still viewed him as a partner in their anti-corruption purge, analysts say.

The growing rift between the military and courts surfaced in April, when the Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial, ruled that the current government's attempt to delay local elections in two provinces, including the most populous, Punjab, was unconstitutional. At the time, the ruling was widely considered a boon for Mr. Khan's political party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf or P.T.I.

A month later, the Supreme Court ordered Mr. Khan to be released from custody, and soon afterward the Islamabad High Court granted him pre-emptive bail in several corruption cases he is facing.

Mr. Khan's supporters say that his opponents are trying to have him arrested to prevent him from hitting the streets and whipping up support for his party ahead of the country's general elections this fall.

Mr. Sharif's government has already attempted to rein in the powers of Mr. Bandial, who has been accused of being politically aligned with Mr. Khan.

In March, Pakistan's parliament passed a new law to curtail the powers of the chief justice, reassigning his unique powers — including the ability to convene a small panel of specific judges to hear cases — to a committee of three justices. But later that day, the Supreme Court issued an injunction, preventing the law from taking effect.

In doing so, the court showed that while its powers are limited and it has no ability to enforce its rulings, it is still a force to be reckoned with as the country barrels toward general elections this fall, analysts say.

That new dynamic, said Mr. Kureshi, the lecturer at Oxford University, "changes the game and changes the way in which political bargaining with these unelected institutions happens."

National

The New York Times

Inside Look at the Obama Presidency

New Oral History Peers Back at His Era and the Tradeoffs He Made

By PETER BAKER



DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

President Barack Obama in 2013. A first set of interviews for a new oral history project was released on Wednesday.

WASHINGTON — On a day of high drama at an international climate change conference early in his administration, President Barack Obama confronted a senior Chinese official who offered what the American delegation considered a weak commitment. Mr. Obama dismissed the offer. Not good enough.

The Chinese official erupted. "What do you mean that's not good enough? Why isn't that good enough?" he demanded. He referred to a past conversation with John Kerry, then a Democratic senator from Massachusetts. "I talked to Senator Kerry and Senator Kerry said that was good enough."

Mr. Obama looked at him evenly. "Well," he replied, "Senator Kerry is not president of the United States."

That moment of sharp relief, a clash with an intransigent foreign apparatchik by a young American president feeling his own way, comes to life in a new oral history project on the Obama administration released on Wednesday. Six years after Mr. Obama left office, the project by Incite, a social science research institute at Columbia University, has assembled perhaps the most extensive collection of interviews from the era to date.

Researchers interviewed 470 Obama administration veterans, critics, activists and others who were in the thick of major events back then, including Mr. Obama and the first lady, Michelle Obama, amassing a total of 1,100 hours of recordings. Transcripts of the interviews are being released in batches over the next three years, starting with a first set of 17 made public on Wednesday focused on climate change, a central issue then that continues to shape the national debate today.

"There will be hundreds of new insights that come from this study, many of which will change our understanding of the Obama presidency and the period from 2008 to 2016 more generally," said Peter Bearman, founding director of Incite and the principal investigator for the Obama oral history project.

What makes Mr. Obama's presidency distinctive is the way it resonated around the world in the "Obama moment," as Evan McCormick, who led the foreign policy part of the project, put it. "One thing that becomes clear in our interviews is that the moment of great hope and expectation ushered in by the election of the first Black president was a global one," he said.

Oral histories of past presidencies have become valuable resources for historians and researchers in recent decades. The Miller Center at the University of Virginia has conducted such projects going back to Jimmy Carter's presidency. The Columbia project was organized with the support of the



DAMON WINTER / THE NEW YORK TIMES

Mr. Obama, then an Illinois senator, campaigning in Florida the day before the 2008 election. Researchers interviewed 470 people for the project.



DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

The Affordable Care Act, signed in March 2010, required a tradeoff that left climate change legislation for later.

Obama Foundation.

The first tranche of interviews does not include those of the former president, first lady or other major recognizable figures from the Obama era. Instead, it is tightly focused on one issue that the researchers deemed vital to his presidency, a wonk's feast of policy discussion rather than a broader look at Mr. Obama himself or his overall eight years in power.

Still, some flavor of his management behind the scenes comes through even in these limited initial interviews. As he sucked down his favorite Fiji water, Mr. Obama would tease scientists and engineers. "I stayed away from you all in school," he would say. "I'm a lawyer. I don't like math. I don't do math." And when Steven Chu, his Nobel Prize-winning physicist-turned-energy secretary, showed up with 30 slides when five would have sufficed, an exasperated president would say, "Steve, we've got it. We've got it. We don't need to look at any more of those."

The focus on climate change in the first set of interviews also highlighted the larger tradeoffs Mr. Obama made between competing priorities. The transcripts make clear, for instance, how he put off major legislative action on climate change in favor of health care at the start of his tenure in 2009, perhaps dooming chances for the sweeping measure he would eventually advocate.

At one point as he was expending all of his influence to pass the Affordable Care Act, he ruefully explained his priorities to Mr. Chu. "Look, I know I said energy and health care, but next year," he said. "Energy is next."

By the time he turned his attention to a clean energy plan in the form of a cap-and-trade system that would create market incentives to reduce greenhouse emissions, Mr. Obama's political capital had been drained. The bill he pushed made it through the House but not the Democratic-controlled Senate.



STEPHEN CROWLEY/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Mr. Obama, visiting Everglades National Park in 2015, enacted the nation's first climate change policy after sweeping to his second term in 2012.

"With Obama, I was just so absolutely hopeful," recalled Carol M. Browner, his White House coordinator for energy and climate change policy. "I just felt like, we're finally here on climate change. And we were. Then the Senate would never take up the bill."

Mr. Chu, who considered Mr. Obama "an extraordinary president" for putting aside personal politics, nonetheless gave voice to the disappointment of many of his allies that he did not try harder to pressure Congress. In his oral history interview, Mr. Chu compared Mr. Obama with President Lyndon B. Johnson, who was famous for strong-arming lawmakers into passing landmark civil rights laws and the Great Society anti-poverty program.

"He was less connected with Congress than I would have hoped," Mr. Chu said. At one point in 2012, he recalled asking Mr. Obama if he had seen Steven Spielberg's movie "Lincoln," which recounted the moral compromises made to pass the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery. "Now I'm not asking President Obama to do immoral things," Mr. Chu said. "But to shake down and use the power of the presidency to really garner votes was something I wish he had done more of. He was too much of a gentleman, too standoffish about that."

After his re-election in 2012, Mr. Obama recommitted to saving the planet from ecological ruin. "Obama came into the second term clearly ready to rock and roll on climate change," said Todd Stern, his special envoy for climate change at the State Department, who recounted for the Columbia interviewers the painstaking path to the Paris climate accord sealed in 2015, including the scene with the Chinese official. "Obama comes in like gangbusters."

Mr. Obama's successor, President Donald J. Trump, subsequently pulled the United States out of the Paris accord, but President Biden has rejoined the agreement.

The oral history organizers made a point of interviewing those dissatisfied with Mr. Obama as well, such as Bill McKibben, a longtime environmental activist and writer who helped found 350.org, a global grass-roots organization.

"My impatience with Mr. Obama and many others on this front is that I think they tended to group it," meaning climate change, "with other problems that they faced and think about it in the same way that they thought about other things, as one item on a checklist," he said.

"No matter how much I liked him," Mr. McKibben added, "it was very clear he could care less about any of this stuff at some deep level and wasn't willing to sacrifice — suffer any political pain in order to raise the issue."

But his advisers insisted that Mr. Obama did care and said he regretted his early failures. Just before going out to the East Room of the White House in 2015 to announce his Clean Power Plan imposing caps on power plant carbon emissions, he told Gina McCarthy, his Environmental Protection Agency chief and later Mr. Biden's climate adviser, that he was determined to take action for the sake of his two daughters.

"I promised to do something on climate," he told her. "I didn't get it delivered in my first term. And this is so meaningful."

How to Cut Death Rates For Women? Give Cash.

By APOORVA MANDAVILLI

Cash grants made directly to poor families or individuals have led to fewer deaths among women and young children, according to a new analysis of more than 7 million people in 37 countries.

In countries that began making such payments, deaths among women fell by 20 percent, and deaths among children younger than 5 declined by 8 percent, researchers reported on Wednesday in the journal Nature. The impact was apparent within two years of the programs' start and grew over time.

The reductions in death rates were similar whether the funds came with certain conditions, such as school attendance, or whether they had no strings attached, the analysis found. Programs that covered bigger shares of the population or distributed larger amounts of cash produced even greater benefits.

Countries with poor health care and high death rates had the biggest drop in deaths.

Why It Matters: Poverty is a big killer.

In 2019, more than 8 percent of the world's population lived in extreme poverty, subsisting on less than $2.15 per day, and about half the world on less than $6.85 per day. Poverty has insidious effects on housing stability, education, health and life expectancy.

The pandemic drove 97 million additional people into extreme poverty in 2020, according to a World Bank estimate, prompting more countries to start cash transfer programs. Of 962 such programs worldwide, 672 were introduced during the pandemic.

Direct cash transfers have been shown to improve school attendance, nutrition and use of health services. A few single-country studies have linked the payments to reduced death rates. But it was unclear whether those trends applied on a global scale.

"There's some concerns about whether these programs are sustainable, whether governments can and should pay for them," said Harsha Thirumurthy, an economist at the University of Pennsylvania and a co-author of the analysis.

Background: Small payments, big impact.

More than 100 low- and middle-income countries have introduced cash transfer programs designed to mitigate poverty, though they differ widely in how much they pay, how often and to whom.

The new study is the first to examine the effect of cash transfers on death rates worldwide, the researchers said. They collected information on these programs from 2000 to 2019 in 29 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, one in northern Africa, four in the Asia-Pacific region and three in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The data included information on more than 4 million adults and nearly 3 million children. Roughly 300,000 deaths were recorded during the study. Recipients received 6 percent to 13 percent of the per capita income in a particular country, often much less than $100.

"These are not amounts that are anywhere near as large as some of the amounts we're talking about in the U.S. when it comes to guaranteed income programs," Dr. Thirumurthy said.

Still, the findings are relevant even for high-income countries, said Audrey Pettifor, a social epidemiologist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill who studies cash transfers for H.I.V. prevention and women's health.

Donors often worry that beneficiaries may misuse the funds to buy alcohol, junk food or other nonessential items, but "the data just doesn't back that up," she said.

What's Next: The benefits may extend to entire communities.

The researchers could not identify the beneficiaries, so they analyzed population-level death rates. The findings suggest that cash transfers may be helpful not just to women, but to families and entire communities.

"These social protection programs actually account for the vast majority of the income" in households in places like South Africa, Dr. Pettifor said. "One would expect these spillover effects."

Berk Özler, a developmental economist in the World Bank's research division, offered an alternate explanation. Cash transfers are often accompanied by improvements to health care services or other infrastructure that helps communities, he noted.

"Maybe it's not the direct effect of people having more cash in their pocket," he said.

The study did not look at adults older than 60 or at distinct features of the programs, such as duration or frequency of the payments, whether the beneficiaries are men or women, how the money is delivered or whether it is bundled with counseling or education.

"I do think it's useful to look at that in future work," Dr. Thirumurthy said.

Texas State Senator Could Help Decide Fate of Her Embattled Husband

By J. DAVID GOODMAN



State Senator Angela Paxton of Texas, wife of the state attorney general, Ken Paxton, at the Texas Capitol in Austin on Monday.

ERIC GAY/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Last September, a process server arrived at the home of Ken Paxton, the Texas attorney general, as part of a lawsuit filed by groups trying to help women get abortions out of state. Mr. Paxton's wife, State Senator Angela Paxton, greeted him at the door and told him her husband was on the phone. Later, Ms. Paxton was seen out in the driveway, firing up a pickup truck and swinging open a rear passenger door.

At that point, the process server later recounted, Mr. Paxton ran from the garage, climbed into the truck, and the couple disappeared down the street, leaving him to deposit the subpoena on the ground.

Now, Ms. Paxton is in a position to help her husband with a much more existential legal entanglement: She is one of 31 state senators who are designated to act as jurors in Mr. Paxton's impeachment trial this summer, deciding whether to convict him on charges that he abused his office to benefit himself and a donor and permanently remove him from office.

The question of how Ms. Paxton, a second-term Republican senator from north of Dallas, would handle that responsibility — whether she would choose or be required to recuse herself from the decision — has been hanging over the State Capitol since last week, when Mr. Paxton was impeached by a wide margin of Republicans and Democrats in the Texas House.

She is not only married to Mr. Paxton; she has also been directly affected by the conduct that her husband is accused of. Among the articles of impeachment that Mr. Paxton faces are allegations that he had an extramarital affair with a woman and used his office to help a donor who repaid him in part by giving the woman a job.

The same donor, an Austin real estate investor, paid to renovate one of the Paxtons' houses, House investigators said, and Ms. Paxton, according to their findings, had requested an expensive upgrade.

Ms. Paxton, 60, has not publicly commented on the case, and her staff did not respond to a request for an interview. Mr. Paxton, also 60, has denied any wrongdoing.

Through it all — a criminal indictment in 2015, the alleged affair, a wrongful termination lawsuit by his most senior aides in 2020, a barrage of legal fights and personal attacks and now impeachment — Ms. Paxton has stuck with her husband.

"I saw a quote the other day," she said in a 2019 interview, "and it said, the secret to a successful marriage is two sinners who are good at forgiving."

A date for the impeachment trial has not yet been set, though the State Senate has said that it would take place at some point before Aug. 28. As a result of the House impeachment vote on Saturday, Mr. Paxton, a Republican in his third term, was temporarily removed as the attorney general in Texas, a post he had used to aggressively push for conservative policies in state and federal court.

Accused of using his office to benefit himself and a donor.

The Senate sets the rules of the trial and has given itself until June 20 to decide on them. The lieutenant governor, Dan Patrick, has said that "all 31 senators" would have a vote.

On Wednesday, Gov. Greg Abbott, who has not commented on the impeachment, appointed John Scott, the former secretary of state, to serve as interim attorney general pending the resolution of the Senate trial.

In addition to Ms. Paxton, another senator, Bryan Hughes, has been close with Mr. Paxton and was referred to indirectly in one of the articles of impeachment. Mr. Paxton was said to have directed his office to write a legal opinion to help Nate Paul, the real estate investor, and then concealed doing so by asking Mr. Hughes to make the request as a kind of "straw requester."

A spokesman for Mr. Hughes did not comment on the charge.

No one in the State Senate is closer to Mr. Paxton than his wife, a former math teacher and guidance counselor whose first run for office came in 2018, when she ran for the Senate seat once occupied by her husband.

"She's a good person to work with, but she is 110 percent in the far right," said Kel Seliger, a former Republican state senator who overlapped with Ms. Paxton and bristled at Mr. Patrick's ultraconservative leadership. "She will not make any waves in Republican circles."

For decades, since the couple met at Baylor University and married in 1986, the Paxtons have been by each other's side. The two are familiar fixtures in the conservative Christian circles of suburban Dallas.

"People love the Paxtons," said Richard Ellis, pastor of Reunion Church, who knows the couple personally. "If you go to any kind of political event or fund-raiser, and you see them and how people interact with them, you can't help but see that they care about people and people care about them."

But, he added, the accusations against Mr. Paxton have more recently caused some to steer clear, a fact that he lamented. "Too many times, the Christian community, when we're supposed to be running to the fire, we run from the fire," he said. "When we're supposed to be helping people when they're in trouble, we distance ourselves."

A devout Christian and a capable singer, Ms. Paxton has described recording an album of church songs and once sang the national anthem before a Texas Rangers baseball game.

That episode, like so many others, came about at the intersection of her personal life and her husband's political ambitions: He had arranged for her to showcase her singing the anthem at the Dallas kickoff of George W. Bush's first campaign for governor in the 1990s. Mr. Bush at the time was an owner of the Rangers, and Mr. Paxton wanted to impress him, recalled Ms. Paxton in the 2019 interview. "Ken was always really encouraging of me singing," she said.

Ms. Paxton would later gain local political fame by singing at Mr. Paxton's campaign events, especially a song with the catchy, partisan refrain: "I'm a pistol-packing mama, and my husband sues Obama."

The song would later serve as a kind of political biography for Ms. Paxton, who also sings in it of being adopted as an infant. She would later reference her adoption as having shaped her strong views in opposition to abortion.

"Every life really does matter," she said, telling her story at a local Republican club event in 2016, according to a report in a local paper. "When you look at a newborn baby, who knows what God has in store for that child?"

Abraham George, the chair of the Republican Party in Collin County, which is part of Ms. Paxton's district, said he had known the couple for many years and never thought she would get into politics herself, until she did.

"She was very supportive of Ken," he said. "I never expected her to run. I don't think she did either." He has since held fund-raisers for her. "She's easy to work with," he said.

Ms. Paxton's Senate colleagues appeared to agree, saying she was usually pleasant to both Republicans and Democrats. None reached for comment would speak on the record about her.

The September episode with the process server in their driveway was perhaps the most dramatic example of Ms. Paxton's acting to assist her embattled husband, who by that point was facing not only political opposition on the abortion issue, but also criminal indictment for securities fraud and a federal investigation into his firing of top aides who had accused him of corruption. But it was far from the only time she had done so.

In 2019, months after taking office, Ms. Paxton introduced one of her first pieces of legislation: a bill to change the law regarding investment advice that her husband had been accused of violating. The proposal went nowhere.

"No one should think of Angela Paxton as the scorned wife here," said Matt Angle, the director of the Lone Star Project, a Democratic political organization. "She's a full partner."

On Jan. 6, 2021, Ms. Paxton stood on stage next to her husband during a rally with President Donald J. Trump near the U.S. Capitol as he listed his efforts to challenge the results of the 2020 election in several states, hoping to overturn them.

By that point, many of the accusations against Mr. Paxton, including the affair, were already largely known. "Thank God for a Legislature in Texas, like my senator, Angela Paxton, my wife, who put in place laws that protect against fraud," Mr. Paxton told the crowd in Washington that day, as she nodded beside him. As they walked from the stage, she gave him a quick kiss.

And she was with him smiling at his swearing-in for a third term this year.

"They're not hating on each other," said Pastor Ellis, who said he offered an official prayer during the swearing-in ceremony. "If she were trying to make a statement, that would be a pretty easy way to make one," by not showing up, he said. "I have yet to meet a Christian couple that does not have challenges, and the fact that they're still together should tell everybody something."

Susan C. Beachy contributed research.

New Jersey Democrat Seeks Kean's Seat

By TRACEY TULLY

New Jersey's Seventh Congressional District was redrawn last year specifically to boost the chances of Republicans. It worked.

Now, Democrats are trying to win back the seat. But rather than turn to a centrist who mirrors the conservative ethos of the region, the party appears to be coalescing around a candidate who for four years has been the face of New Jersey's progressive left: Sue Altman.

Ms. Altman, who leads the state's liberal-leaning Working Families Alliance and is an ally of Gov. Philip D. Murphy, announced her candidacy Wednesday morning.

"We've trained hard in New Jersey to fight corruption," Ms. Altman, 41, said in an interview. "And I'm ready to turn these skills toward a bigger, much more urgent fight."

Last year, redistricting shored up the odds of victory for the incumbent party in 11 of New Jersey's 12 congressional districts. The only incumbent to lose was Tom Malinowski, a two-term Democrat who represented the Seventh District, which stretches from one side of northern New Jersey to the other and takes in mainly suburban and rural communities.

Tom Kean Jr., a former Republican state lawmaker and namesake of a well-liked governor, defeated Mr. Malinowski in November by 8,691 votes, or roughly three percentage points, to join Speaker Kevin McCarthy's fractious, narrow majority in Washington.

The seat has been identified as a key target of Democrats hoping to regain control of the House. Over Memorial Day weekend, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee ran an ad on a highway billboard that yoked Mr. Kean to former President Donald J. Trump, offering a peek at what is likely to be a nationwide strategy next year in races that coincide with the presidential contest.

With a year and a half before the election, it is likely that additional Democratic challengers to Mr. Kean will emerge. But Ms. Altman's early entry and name recognition gives her a clear edge in a race that even the state's Democratic Party chairman, LeRoy J. Jones Jr., acknowledges will be an uphill fight.

"Sue Altman is a formidable candidate — and so far the only candidate," Mr. Jones said. "Without hearing from anyone else, Sue is in a position to make her case to ultimately be the Democratic nominee."

It is by some measures a counterintuitive choice. The candidate will be running from the left in a district where registered Republicans now outnumber Democrats by 16,000 voters.

Sue Altman hopes to win back a House seat held by a Republican.

Harrison Neely, a top political adviser to Mr. Kean, said Ms. Altman represented the "most divisive and extreme aspects of the fringe of her party."

Mr. Neely said Mr. Kean's focus on reducing the cost of living in New Jersey and his efforts to work across the aisle as a member of the bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus illustrated his "commonsense solutions to our national challenges." He said he was confident Mr. Kean would be reelected.

Ms. Altman said she too intended to focus on making New Jersey more affordable, while stressing the importance of abortion rights, the environment and gun safety.

"Moms and dads should not feel afraid to drop off kids at school, worried about a mass shooting," she said. "We absolutely have to do something to stop it."

Ms. Altman grew up in Clinton, N.J., and now lives in Lambertville, both of which are in Hunterdon County, an affluent region known for its horse farms.

A star high school and college basketball player, Ms. Altman also played at Oxford University while earning her M.B.A.

Her organizing tactics have earned her a reputation as a firebrand willing to throw punches.

She has led protest singalongs outside the offices of Representative Josh Gottheimer, a fellow Democrat, over his brinkmanship during negotiations over key pillars of President Biden's infrastructure and social welfare agenda.

She handed out fake million-dollar bills to mock George Norcross III, a longtime political power broker and frequent nemesis, and sparred with former Republican Gov. Chris Christie over school funding at a 2016 town hall.

"Pity the policy staffer whose job it is to explain something to Sue Altman," said Jennifer Holdsworth, a Democratic strategist based in Washington with two decades of experience with campaigns in New Jersey.

"Even her detractors, her adversaries, would say she is incredibly smart on the issues."

Robert Torricelli, a Democrat who lives in the Seventh District and represented New Jersey in both chambers of Congress, said he anticipated the race would be one of the premier nationwide matchups as Democrats work to chip away at the Republicans' House majority.

"I actually think she's exactly the right contrast to Tom Kean," said Mr. Torricelli, who was influential in selecting candidates to run for Congress when he led the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee between 1999 and 2001. "Sue brings enormous energy."

Mr. Torricelli said Ms. Altman's anti-establishment résumé and her ability to appeal directly to women were likely to gain traction in a district filled with independent-minded voters.

"This is the kind of district where people think they're Republicans," he added. "But they're also pro-environment, pro-choice and culturally progressive."

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Poisonous Problem From Cold War That's Still Without an Answer

From Page A1

tect some of the waste not in impenetrable glass, but in a concrete grout casing that would almost certainly decay thousands of years before the toxic materials that it is designed to hold at bay.

"The Energy Department is coming to a big crossroads," said Thomas Grumbly, a former assistant secretary at the department who oversaw the early days of the project during the Clinton administration.

Successive energy secretaries over the last 30 years, he said, "have slammed their heads against the wall" to come up with a technology and budget that would make the problem go away not only at Hanford, but also at other nuclear weapons sites around the country.

Plants in South Carolina, Washington, Ohio and Idaho that helped produce more than 60,000 atomic bombs have tons of radioactive debris that will be radioactive for thousands of years. And unlike nuclear power plants, whose waste consists of dry uranium pellets locked away in metal tubes, the weapons facilities are dealing with millions of gallons of a peanut butter-like sludge stored in aging underground tanks.

Two million pounds of mercury remain in the soils and waters of eastern Tennessee. Radioactive plumes are contaminating the Great Miami aquifer near Cincinnati.

At site after site, the solution has come down to a choice between an expensive, decades-long cleanup or quicker action that leaves a large amount of waste in place.

Hanford, some 580 square miles of shrub-steppe desert in south-central Washington State, is the largest and most contaminated of all the weapons production sites — too polluted to ever be returned to public use. But the problem is urgent, given the risk of radionuclides contaminating the Columbia River, a vital lifeline for cities, farms, tribes and wildlife in two states.

The search for a solution has dragged on so long that there is pressure to produce some result for all the massive spending, even if it does not meet past expectations. That could mark a dramatic retreat from longstanding promises to nearby residents — who experienced thyroid, reproductive and nervous system tumors linked by researchers to exposure during the era of plutonium production — that the government would adhere to the highest possible cleanup standards.

The negotiations between federal and state officials have involved stretching out the cleanup schedule and using grout instead of glass to stabilize about half of the low-level radioactive waste taken from the site, as well as thousands of gallons of waste stuck in the tanks when the rest of the high-level waste is removed.

The potential for a compromise that would allow some of that waste to remain in the bottom of the tanks has set off sharp disagreements among experts: Some say using grout to encase it would be a scientifically safe, economical solution. Critics warn that the waste could outlive the grout and seep out again in future centuries.

Energy Department officials say that any plan adopted will be sufficient to render the site safe for future generations and that any waste left behind would pose no threat to human health.

Brian Vance, a former Navy submarine captain who is the department's site manager at Hanford, said the original expectations ran into formidable scientific and financial obstacles. He said engineers were trying to find a solution that was both safe and possible.

"If you think about the decisions made in the 1990s, the project plan was quite a bit different," he said. It required unproven technology that was "easy to make on the drawing board, but hard to make as you progress and see the realities."

Mr. Grumbly said he presented the Clinton administration years ago with budget estimates of hundreds of billions of dollars to clean up former nuclear weapons sites around the country. Officials at the Office of Management and Budget told him "to never show them publicly," he recalled.

"They have under-prioritized it," he said of the federal government, noting that even now, the Biden administration had not nominated an assistant secretary to oversee the cleanup.

As it stands, the job of treating the tank waste at Hanford alone carries an official price tag of up to $528 billion; at the current rate of spending, it could take centuries to budget and finish the project.

Congress sent about $2.8 billion this year to the site, with about $1.7 billion allocated to cleaning up the tanks. But there has been relatively little real progress.

Gary Brunson, the Energy Department's former engineering director at the waste treatment plant, said the cleanup had been a failure. He and two other technical managers filed a whistle-blower suit in 2013 against the chief cleanup contractor, Bechtel and its partner, accusing the company of doing defective work and then illegally lobbying for budget increases. The suit was joined by the Justice Department and settled in 2016 for $125 million.

Putting a focus on treating less dangerous, low-level waste faster would be part of a significant retreat in the mission, in Mr. Brunson's view.

"The whole purpose of that plant was to treat the high-level waste," he said. "They couldn't do that so they are treating low-level waste. They don't have a comprehensive plan, so they are making up these interim goals."

The original architecture for immobilizing the tank waste was to chemically separate it, using the now-mothballed treatment plant, into low and high radioactive streams. Then, two separate melter plants — human-made volcanoes that operate at the temperature of lava — would encase both in glass.

But precisely how to do that safely has proved elusive.

"They have built one of the most complex mousetraps in the world," Mr. Brunson said. "It will never work."

The reality, he said, is that the 54 million gallons of sludge will most likely never be removed; he believes it will be grouted and left in place for future generations to deal with.

Construction of the chemical treatment plant was stopped by former President Barack Obama's energy secretary, Steven Chu, amid allegations that the process could lead to explosions of hydrogen gas and spontaneous nuclear fission.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office has recommended abandoning the plant, owing to the costs of ever making it work. "We could build an elevator to the moon. I would put the pre-treatment plant in the same category," said Nathan Anderson, a director of the G.A.O.'s environmental team.

Then comes the issue of permanently stabilizing the waste. Almost no one disagrees that the most dangerous high-level waste must be encased in glass and buried in a geologically stable repository such as Yucca Mountain in Nevada, a site that for decades has been politically off the table.

$1.7 Billion

The amount Congress allocated to treat tank waste at Hanford this year.

But what to do with the lower-level wastes is less certain, and that is an important part of the current negotiations. The G.A.O. concluded that grouting much of it would be just as environmentally safe as putting it in glass, get the job done faster, save billions of dollars and pose a lower risk of an industrial accident.

But the Washington Department of Ecology's Hanford project manager, David Bowen, considers it a safety risk and wants it shipped out of state.

There are even bigger stakes in dealing with the high-level waste.

Even though most of it will be vitrified, engineers estimate that up to 1 percent of the radioactive sludge could be left behind when most of the waste is removed, according to Energy Department documents and state officials.

Energy officials say that radioactivity levels of any residual waste would be relatively low, and that grout would prevent the tanks from collapsing as they rust.

But the total waste left behind could be in the hundreds of thousands of gallons, and critics say it could be highly dangerous.

"The closer you get to the bottom of those tanks, the more radioactive, toxic and dangerous waste is," said Geoffrey Fettus, a lawyer with the Natural Resources Defense Council, which has sued the government over the Hanford cleanup.

"We would oppose it," said Nikolas Peterson, executive director of the watchdog group Hanford Challenge, which has long pushed for a safe resolution.

There has been some progress. Cleanup workers have demolished contaminated buildings, cleansed soil along the Columbia and stabilized seven reactors that made plutonium.

But around central Washington, an area that is home to the state's famous grape vineyards and apple orchards, there is a growing sense of impatience.

Leaders of the Yakama Nation, an 11,000-member tribe whose ancestral lands once included the Hanford site, say their 1855 treaty promised that tribe members would have the right to hunt and fish on healthy lands.

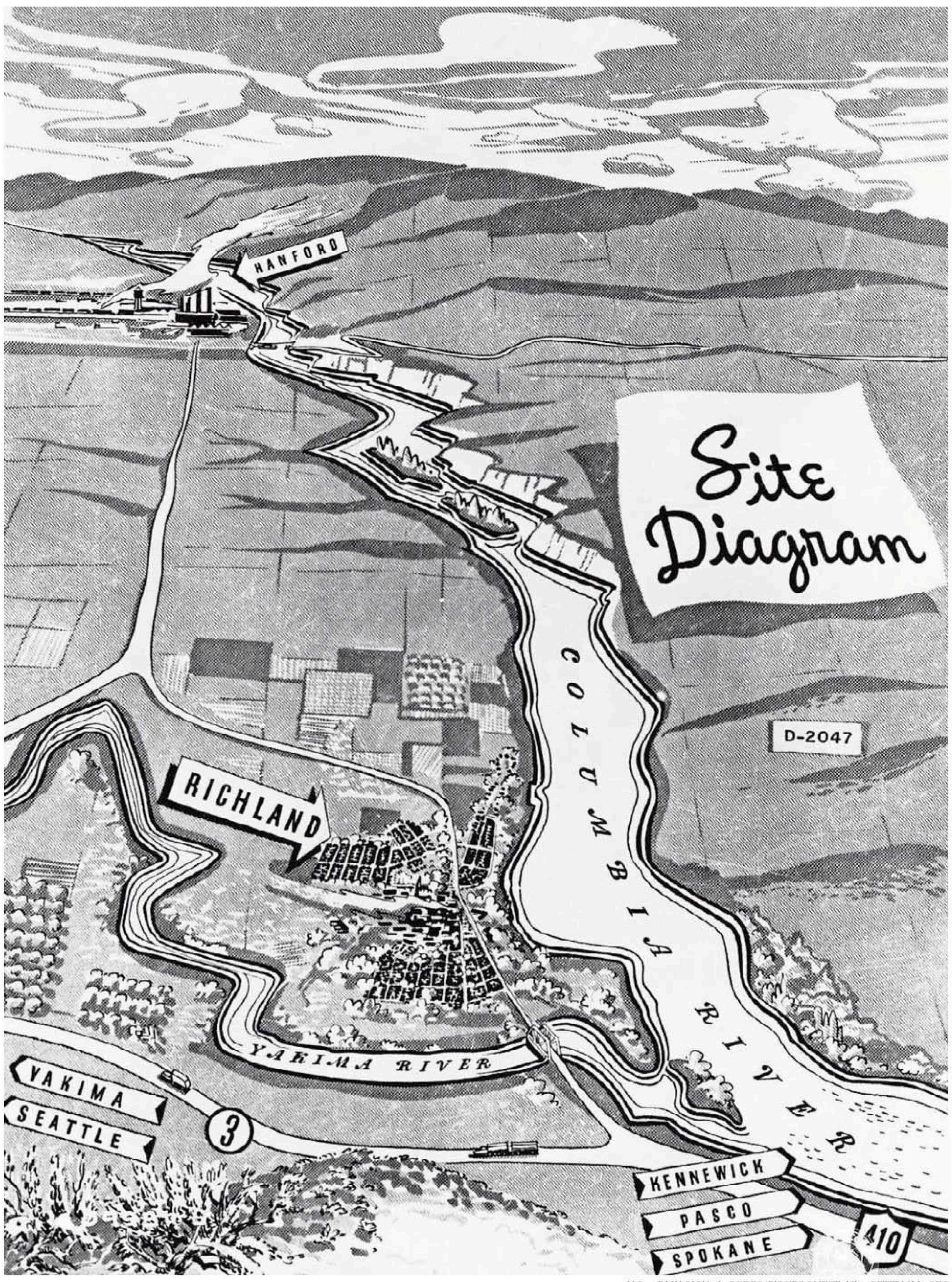
"Before the Manhattan Project, there was a handshake agreement that this area would be returned to the way it was," said Trina Sherwood, a cultural specialist in the tribe's natural resources department. "How can we agree to leave the poison in the land?"

Yet returning the land to what it once was is an outcome that almost no one expects.

"There are parts of the site that will never be turned over," Mr. Vance, the Hanford site manager, said. "We are going to be here a long time."

Toxic Legacy

Hanford, 580 square miles in central Washington, is the largest and most contaminated of all the nuclear-weapon production sites in the U.S.

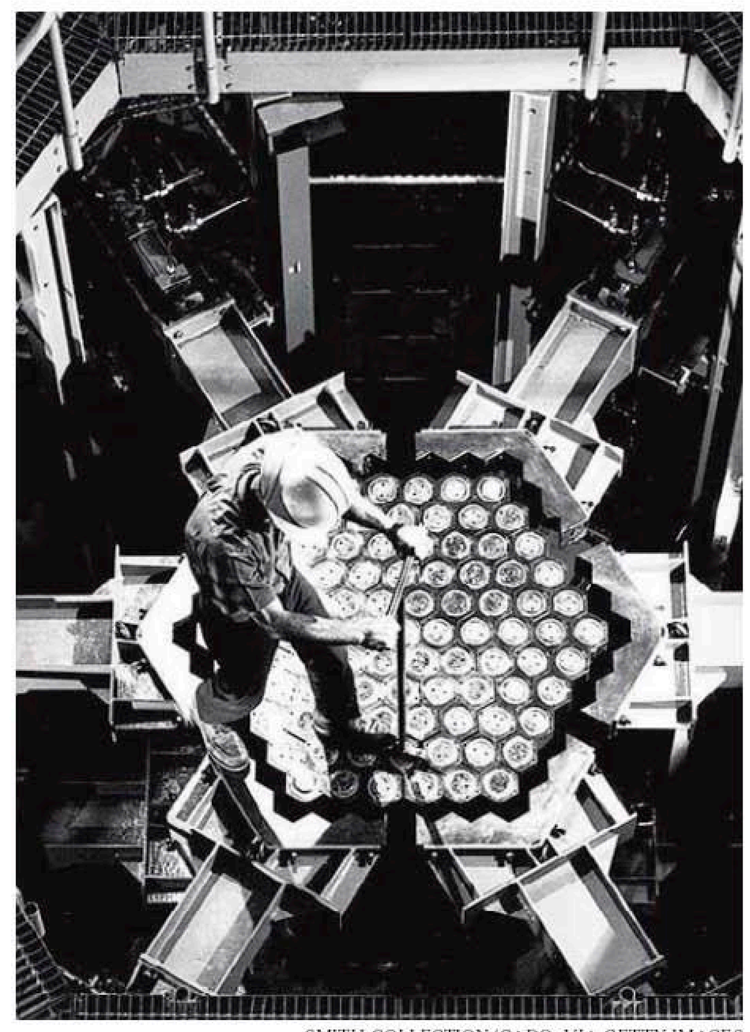


U.S. ARMY SIGNAL CORPS/PHOTOQUEST, VIA GETTY IMAGES



BETTMANN COLLECTION, VIA GETTY IMAGES

Hanford in 1978. It was part of a network of plants that made more than 60,000 bombs.



SMITH COLLECTION/GADO, VIA GETTY IMAGES

Plans to deal with the tons of leftover radioactive waste have been in the works for decades.

Complex Cleanup

B Plant, below left, Hanford's earliest plutonium processing facility, and a vitrification facility built to process less hazardous waste.



MASON TRINCA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



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Warning signs outside the Hanford nuclear site in southeastern Washington. Trina D. Sherwood, cultural specialist for the Yakama Nation's Department of Natural Resources. "How can we agree to leave the poison in the land?" she said.

Results Are Mixed As Top Food Awards Try to Penalize Abuse

From Page A1

that serves cuisine inspired by what she grew up eating in Lexington, Ky., as the daughter of Sri Lankan immigrants.

In what she called "an interrogation," the investigators asked her about social media posts she had made on both private and public accounts. Someone had sent them to the foundation through an anonymous tip line on its website. The men told Ms. Fore that the posts potentially violated the organization's code of ethics — specifically that they amounted to "targeted harassment" and "bullying."

They included an Instagram post, she said, that was part of a domestic-violence awareness campaign, and others related to her advocacy for victims of sexual violence, including "vague tweets" about people the posts did not name.

She said she told the investigators: "We've been talking for 90 minutes about these tweets, and you don't know who I'm 'targeting' with them. How is that targeted harassment?"

On Wednesday, after this article was published online, the foundation notified Ms. Fore in an email that she had not been disqualified from the awards, which will be given out at a ceremony in Chicago on Monday. The investigation, it said, "did not find it more likely than not that you violated the Code of Ethics."

Even so, she believes that what was supposed to be the honor of a lifetime could actually do her more harm than good.

"I realize that my presence is a good look for Beard, but I cooked my way across the country to get to this level," she said. "Now all I've done can be dismissed because someone on the internet called me a bully?"

Started in 1985 to honor the food writer James Beard, the foundation established its chef and restaurant awards in 1991.

The foundation has identified itself more and more closely with chefs and restaurants over the years, riding the rise in popularity of chef culture starting in the 1990s. As the American public became increasingly fascinated by restaurants and the people who run them, the profile of the awards grew, the events became more glamorous, the brand partnerships more lucrative. (According to I.R.S. filings, the foundation's revenues jumped from $5 million in 2010 to $18 million in 2020.)

By making itself the chief arbiter of restaurant excellence, however, the foundation also made many of the restaurant world's most pernicious problems — inequality, lack of diversity in leadership, workplace abuse of many kinds — its own.

To address those problems, the foundation established an ethics committee before the 2022 awards, along with the tip line and the pursuant investigations, to ensure that the awards would not celebrate chefs who failed to meet its standards. (Brett Anderson, who co-wrote this article, was on the restaurant awards committee from 2002 to 2012.)

"The James Beard awards are known as the standard bearers of excellence in the industry. We take that very seriously," said Clare Reichenbach, the foundation's chief executive. "We've built a process with great intentionality, that we think has rigor, that reflects our values and our mission, and we stand by it."

But it is unclear whether the foundation is up to the task of vetting the finalists.

Katie Button, whose restaurant Cúrate in Asheville, N.C., won the Beard award for outstanding hospitality last year, said the awards have a tremendous effect on restaurants, from reservations to staff morale to social media followers.

"They are effectively deciding that they will be delivering the judgment and the sentence," she said. "They need to think about the gravity of their decisions."

Since the awards began in 1991, chefs have questioned their fairness and the foundation's transparency and integrity. A scandal in 2004, in which the organization's longtime president was convicted of embezzlement and the trustees resigned en masse, did not help matters.

In August 2020, as the culinary world struggled through the pandemic and Black Lives Matter protests unfolded across the country, the foundation stumbled again. Although the voting for the awards was already complete, it decided to cancel the entire awards program for that year.

The foundation attributed the move to the ravages of Covid-19, but it soon leaked out the awards had been canceled for other reasons: None of the winners were people of color, and some finalists stood accused of verbal and physical abuse.

Foundation leaders quietly proposed a revote, which outraged some awards judges, who publicly accused the foundation of manipulating the results. Ultimately, no awards were given in the major restaurant and chef categories.

The foundation then canceled the 2021 awards and embarked on an internal audit, which resulted in a sweeping overhaul of its board, mission and processes. For 2022, the awards were rebuilt to consider not just culinary excellence, but also equity, leadership, sustainability, diversity and other values aligned with the group's new mission.

"We are watching an institution self-correct in real time," said Erick Williams, the chef-owner of the Chicago restaurant Virtue and last year's winner for Best Chef: Great Lakes. "The ceiling had to be cracked, the mold had to be reshaped."

The ethics committee and the tip line were part of that reshaping.

If Ms. Fore's case raises questions about whether the foundation should be investigating the anonymous accusations against her, the case of Timothy Hontzas raises questions about what the foundation does once it concludes its investigation.

Mr. Hontzas, the chef and owner of Johnny's, in Homewood, Ala., is a finalist for Best Chef: South, as he was last year. On May 10, he received an email saying he had been disqualified from this year's awards.

"Based on the review conducted, the Ethics Committee found it more likely than not that you violated the Code of Ethics," the email read. It went on: "You are prohibited from using the seal, logo or image of the James Beard Awards, and from claiming any recognition from the Foundation in connection with the 2023 Awards."

News of his disqualification quickly spread on social media and in news reports.

Mr. Hontzas said that in a Zoom interview in April, a Beard investigator asked him about anonymous allegations that he had yelled at employees and customers.

In an interview with The New York Times, with his lawyer present, Mr. Hontzas said he didn't deny the accusations to the investigators, but told them the incidents as he recalled them were not as severe as the accusers described. He also said that none of the incidents rose to the level of an ethics violation. (The disqualification email does not reference specific allegations.)

"I don't understand how one call can completely ruin the possibility of winning the award," Mr. Hontzas said.

But one of his former employees, Emily Heeter, agreed with the disqualification, though she said she did not send the tip to the Beard foundation. Mr. Hontzas hired her to her first job out of high school, in 2016. In the five years she worked on and off at Johnny's, she said he regularly yelled at customers and employees and even threw plates at her head. She said she quit three times because of his outbursts.

"I'm usually not a crier, but he'll yell and yell and yell at you until you start crying, and he'll yell some more," Ms. Heeter said. On one such occasion, she said, "I looked out into the dining room and all of the customers were silent."

Mr. Hontzas denied Ms. Heeter's allegations in an email and said she was twice "terminated based on her performance" and "simply did not return to work" at the end of her final shift at Johnny's.

The foundation does not comment on specific ethics investigations, in order to keep them confidential, but that confidentiality presents potential issues of its own. In order to maintain it, the organization does not remove the names of those disqualified from previously issued news releases, from the ballot or even from the program at the gala.

In other words, if Mr. Hontzas hadn't gone public with his disqualification, he would have remained a Beard award finalist as far as the public knew, and could even have attended the gala in Chicago — scenarios the foundation seems not to have considered.

"I think you have hit on one of the tougher issues in this process," said Steve Koch, the chairman of the foundation's governance committee. "We made a judgment that our goals and our mission are better served by coming out the way we did."

It's even possible that Mr. Hontzas could get the most votes in his category. In that event, the second-place finalist would be declared the winner, the foundation later said. (The foundation confirmed that it conducted ethics investigations last year, but would not confirm whether any disqualifications were made.)

Ms. Fore and Mr. Hontzas said that the secrecy around ethics investigations also leaves the process vulnerable to being weaponized by candidates' competitors or enemies, and that they weren't given a full opportunity to respond to allegations.

"The Zoom call was the only chance I had to defend myself," Ms. Fore said.

The ethics violations the foundation investigates range from yelling at employees to sexual assault. No matter what an investigation uncovers, the foundation said it would not publicize its findings or report them to law enforcement.

Ms. Reichenbach said that confidentiality is necessary to protect the anonymity of the accusers and the reputations of the accused. "We don't want to be publicly shaming people," she said. "We are here to celebrate those who are winning."

The blanket confidentiality angered some judges and members of the chef and restaurant awards committee, who weren't informed of the ethics committee's decision to disqualify Mr. Hontzas. At least three judges resigned, including Vishwesh Bhatt.

Mr. Bhatt is the chef of Snackbar, in Oxford, Miss., a past Beard winner and a finalist this year. He was mystified that the foundation would keep information from judges that is germane to their duties as voters.

"You trust us to uphold these ethics, but then you won't tell us when you find someone has violated them," he said. "What is this, Yelp?"

Tanya Holland, a chef, restaurateur and writer who chairs Beard's awards board, was asked about leaving the names of disqualified finalists on the ballots and among those announced at the gala.

"I think this is an unfortunate example where we have to say, 'Now we've learned something,'" said Ms. Holland, who is also on the board of trustees. "Next year we'll have to do better."

Despite her feelings about the investigation, Ms. Fore said she still planned to attend the awards ceremony. She already bought flights and a ticket to the gala for her husband, and she "can't get the tickets refunded."

Whatever happens in Chicago, Ms. Fore is proceeding with construction of her first brick-and-mortar restaurant, which she plans to open in the fall — another project she's been distracted from since the foundation's investigation began.

"These people have no idea what it's like to be a woman of color in this business," she said. "What they don't understand is that I exist despite them. Winning a Beard wasn't even on my list of goals."



JESSICA EBELHAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

'These people have no idea what it's like to be a woman of color in this business.'
SAM FORE, above, a finalist for the James Beard awards.



ERIN NELSON, THE HOMEWOOD STAR/STARNES MEDIA

'I don't understand how one call can completely ruin the possibility of winning the award.'
TIMOTHY HONTZAS, above, who has been disqualified from the awards.



G. PAUL BURNETT/THE NEW YORK TIMES

The James Beard awards in 1994. The awards' prestige increased with the rise in popularity of chef culture in the 1990s, and the foundation that hands out the prizes has seen its revenues soar.

Data Making Phenomena Tough to ID, NASA Says

By JULIAN E. BARNES

Members of a NASA task force that studies unidentified anomalous phenomena said on Wednesday that they were pushing the government to collect better data to try to find answers for unexplained events that have captured the public's imagination.

A Pentagon official speaking at the meeting said the Defense Department is examining more than 800 cases from the past 27 years, but only 2 to 5 percent of those incidents are considered truly unexplained. The numbers are an increase from 2022 and represent new information that the Federal Aviation Administration has given to the Pentagon as well as an uptick in reports after a Chinese spy balloon transited the United States.

Why It Matters: These phenomena have fascinated the public.

People are and always will be interested in space aliens, but these unexplained incidents are not extraterrestrial visitations — they are mostly drones, balloons and trash blowing in the winds.

"There is no conclusive evidence suggesting an extraterrestrial origin for U.A.P.s," said Nadia Drake, a panel member and science journalist who has written in the past for The New York Times. "Collecting more good data from the scientific community to review in a peer-reviewed context will be important for progress to be made here."

One reason data on U.A.P.s is so bad is that the military cameras, radar and other sensors that have collected videos are typically fine-tuned for other purposes, such as bomb targeting, rather than being designed to gather data necessary to identify nonhostile objects.

Many in the public are invested in the idea that some of the anomalous phenomena could be extraterrestrial. NASA officials said many panel members had been subjected to online harassment. Throughout the meeting, many commentators on NASA's YouTube feed accused panel members of lying or covering up evidence of extraterrestrials.

Despite such hostility, the panel tried to explain some of the material that has fascinated the public. It used some (slightly tricky) high school geometry to explain how the object in one video taken by a Navy plane in 2015 known as "GOFAST" was not moving quickly but at just 40 m.p.h. by illustrating how the vantage point on an object could be a visual trick.

Scott J. Kelly, a former astronaut, said that when flying, whether in air or space, optical illusions abound. When he was a F-14 Tomcat pilot, he said, the flight officer in the back seat thought he saw a U.F.O.

"I didn't see it," Mr. Kelly said. "We turned around. We went to go look at it. It turns out it was Bart Simpson, a balloon."

Background: Many examples, most with explanations.

Many military U.A.P. videos appear interesting at first, but only later do ordinary explanations emerge.

Sean M. Kirkpatrick, the director of the Pentagon's All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office, presented a video recorded by a P-3 surveillance plane, which showed three dots that appeared to move back and forth. Further research found that the dots were three planes about 40 miles away waiting to land at an airport.

Mr. Kirkpatrick showed another video in which something remains unexplained, but which was an example of the kind of thing the U.S. military sees around the world. The video, recorded by a MQ-9 drone flying in the Middle East last year, appeared to show a silver orb. While some outside experts have said such objects appear to be stray weather balloons, Mr. Kirkpatrick said they have no further data and cannot yet come to a firm conclusion.

Throughout the public meeting, experts repeatedly emphasized that the data collected of almost all of the unexplained incidents was of low quality, and therefore it was difficult to reach any conclusions about many incidents.

What's Next: The task force's report.

NASA will release a report of its task force by the end of July, making recommendations to the government. But it was clear from the panel discussion on Wednesday that improving data collection to quickly resolve unexplained or anomalous sightings will take time.

In the meantime, reports of U.F.O.s will continue to proliferate.

Top Court's Ruling on Guns May Void Biden Son's Case

By GLENN THRUSH and MICHAEL S. SCHMIDT

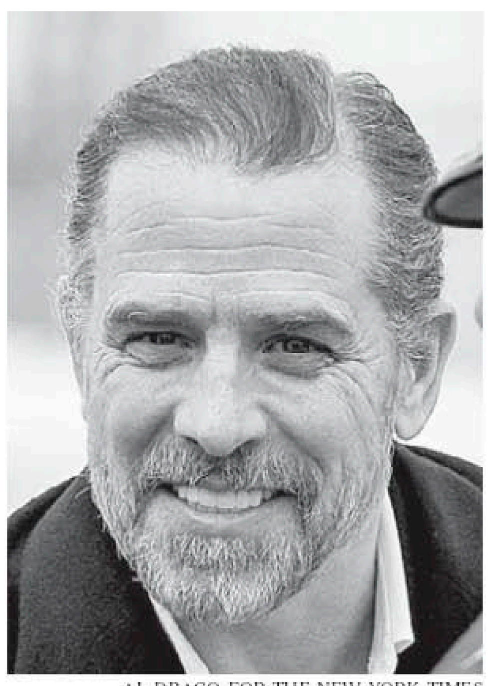
WASHINGTON — To Hunter Biden's father, the Supreme Court decision last June that expanded Second Amendment rights is a travesty for gun control.

But to Hunter Biden's lawyers, it has been an opening.

In the months after the court's landmark ruling that gave people a broad right to carry guns outside the home, Mr. Biden's lawyers told Justice Department prosecutors — who were investigating whether to charge him in connection with a gun purchase — that a prosecution of him would likely be ruled moot, according to two people briefed on the matter.

While it is not uncommon for defense lawyers to point to shifting precedents to stave off prosecution, the circumstances of this argument, like so many elements of the Hunter Biden saga, are striking: A president's son is invoking a court decision his father has described as an affront to "common sense and the Constitution" — and staking that claim on a majority opinion written by Justice Clarence Thomas, a vigorous supporter of gun rights whom many Democrats see as having helped enable the gun lobby.

The U.S. attorney in Delaware,



AL DRAGO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Hunter Biden was accused of lying on a federal firearms application when asked if he was addicted to drugs in 2018.

David C. Weiss, is wrapping up his investigation into Hunter Biden as uncertainty mounts about the legality of many gun laws after the court's landmark ruling last summer, which has led to a wide-ranging assault on existing firearms laws.

Mr. Biden is under investigation for several potential offenses, including whether he had lied on a federal firearms application in 2018 when asked if he was addicted to drugs. His lawyers, including the white-collar defense lawyer Christopher Clark, have argued that any charge against him would likely be thrown out after federal appeals courts rule on two major challenges that cite the Supreme Court decision as precedent.

It is unclear if Mr. Weiss is receptive to that suggestion. A spokeswoman for Mr. Weiss did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

One case the Hunter Biden team has cited is a challenge to the criteria used in the federal firearms background check system, which relies on a ubiquitous application known as a 4473 form, pending before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, which includes Delaware. In that case, Bryan David Range, a Pennsylvania man who was denied a gun permit over a decades-old misdemeanor, is asking to be granted gun ownership based, in part, on Justice Thomas's opinion.

That case, argued in February, is likely to be decided over the next several months.

Hunter Biden's lawyers have relied on the argument as they have asserted that the long-running Justice Department investigation, which has examined an array of matters, including his failure to file federal income taxes, should end with no charges. In recent years, the investigation expanded to include scrutiny of his purchase of a handgun in 2018, and his false response of "no" when asked whether he was an "unlawful user" of drugs. At the time, Mr. Biden was struggling to remain sober.

But such federal prosecutions are relatively rare, and seldom pursued as stand-alone charges. And officials at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives responsible for reviewing Mr. Biden's file were skeptical of bringing charges against him, especially considering that he had sought treatment and had no prior criminal history, according to another person with knowledge of the situation.

There have been calls in recent years to alter or remove the drug question from the firearms application, especially when it comes to marijuana, but Congress has not amended federal firearms or drug laws, and federal officials have not weakened their regulations.

The case before the Third Circuit — which has drawn national attention — challenges the government's right to block people convicted of nonviolent crimes or other "nonserious" violations from owning a firearm. (Mr. Range's offense was misrepresenting his income to obtain food stamps.)

At the center of the case, as in the Hunter Biden investigation, is the 4473 form, "a gotcha trap intended to deny people their Second Amendment rights," said Michael P. Gottlieb, Mr. Range's lawyer.

"This is a case of national importance," he said. "Whatever the Third Circuit decides, I see this going all the way up to the Supreme Court."

Justice Department lawyers have said that nonviolent offenses indicate a person's general "disrespect for rule of law" and should bar them from gun ownership.

But the Supreme Court's ruling has spawned dozens of lawsuits across the country, including some that challenge the federal government's right to deny firearms to people who are addicted to drugs. The most significant decision to date came in February when an appeals panel in New Orleans struck down part of a federal law that banned people under domestic violence restraining orders from owning firearms.

Most of the cases are based on a standard established in Justice Thomas's majority opinion, which asked that gun laws be "consistent with this nation's historical tradition of firearm regulation."

Another case Mr. Biden's team has cited is a February ruling from a Federal District Court in Oklahoma that struck down parts of a federal law prohibiting marijuana users from owning firearms. The Justice Department is expected to appeal the decision.



KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Speaker Kevin McCarthy, seeking Republican support on Wednesday, had framed the debt ceiling deal as a "small step putting us on the right track."

House Passes Debt Limit Bill, Dodging Default

From Page A1

The compromise was structured with the aim of enticing votes from both parties. It allowed Republicans, who refused to raise the debt ceiling and avert a default without conditions, to say that they succeeded in reducing some federal spending — even as funding for the military and veterans' programs would continue to grow — while allowing Democrats to say they spared most domestic programs from the severe cuts.

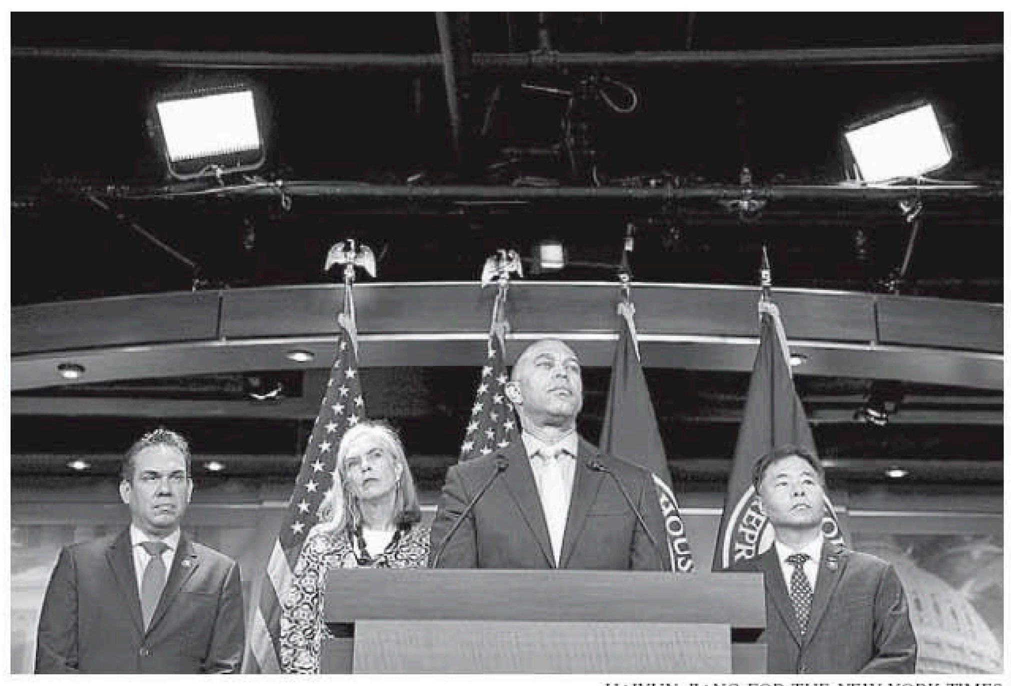
Mr. McCarthy framed the bill on Wednesday as a "small step putting us on the right track" and urged his members to support it.

"We're finally bending the curve on discretionary spending because of this bill, and we're doing it while at the same time raising our national defense and our veterans fully funded, with Social Security and Medicare preserved," Mr. McCarthy said in a speech on the House floor, adding, "That is a major victory."

Representative Hakeem Jeffries, Democrat of New York and the minority leader, described the deal as a vital step and thanked Democrats for their "efforts to make sure that we push back the extreme MAGA Republican efforts to jam right-wing cuts down the throats of the American people."

"From the very beginning, House Democrats were clear that we would not allow extreme MAGA Republicans to default on our debt, crash the economy or trigger a job-killing recession," Mr. Jeffries said. "Under the leadership of President Joe Biden, Democrats kept our promise."

In the Senate, both Democratic and Republican leaders said they would swiftly take up the legislation and push to get the package to Mr. Biden as quickly as possible, with Senator Chuck Schumer, Democrat of New York and the majority leader, warning that lawmakers would need to approve the bill without changes to meet the June 5 deadline when the Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen has said the government would default without action by Congress.



HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Representative Hakeem Jeffries, the minority leader, had also urged Democrats on Wednesday to back the compromise bill.

"I cannot stress enough that we have no margin for error," Mr. Schumer said. "Either we proceed quickly and send this bipartisan agreement to the president's desk or the federal government will default for the first time ever."

The vote on Wednesday was a major victory for Mr. McCarthy, the California Republican, who faced a vast challenge in shepherding a debt ceiling increase through a narrowly divided chamber populated by Republicans who have long refused to raise the borrowing limit. Few had expected that Mr. McCarthy would be able to unite his fractious conference around any such measure, much less one negotiated with Mr. Biden, without prompting an attempt by his right flank to oust him.

As of Wednesday, no such effort had materialized, though there still may be political consequences ahead for Mr. McCarthy after a vote that reflected the depth of Republican opposition to the deal he cut.

Representative Dan Bishop, Republican of North Carolina and a member of the ultraconservative House Freedom Caucus, has publicly said that he considered the debt and spending deal grounds for removing Mr. McCarthy from his post. Another member of the group, Representative Ken Buck, Republican of Colorado, told CNN that its members would have "discussions about whether" to try to oust him.

"I'm not suggesting the votes are there to remove the speaker, but the speaker promised that we would operate at 2022 appropriations levels when he got the support to be speaker," Mr. Buck said. "He's now changed that to 2023 levels plus one percent. That's a major change for a lot of people."

Under the rules House Republicans adopted at the beginning of the year that helped Mr. McCarthy become speaker, any single lawmaker could call for a snap vote to depose him, a move that would require a majority of the House.

Hard-right lawmakers were furious over the compromise, savaging the bill and Mr. McCarthy's handling of the negotiations as a betrayal.

"No one sent us here to borrow an additional $4 trillion to get absolutely nothing in return," said Representative Chip Roy, Republican of Texas, who promised "a reckoning about what just occurred."

In a display of their displeasure, 29 conservative Republicans took the unusual step of breaking ranks on a procedural vote to take up the legislation, normally a formality that passes entirely along party lines.

In a dramatic tableau on the House floor, as the Republican defections piled up, imperiling the deal, Mr. Jeffries finally raised a green voting card in the air, signaling to fellow Democrats that it was time to go ahead and bail Republicans out. A stream of centrist and veteran Democrats — 52 in all — crowded into the well of the House and voted "yes," rescuing the deal from collapse.

In the final vote on the bill, Mr. McCarthy fell one short of the goal he set of delivering 150 Republican votes for the plan, while a huge bloc of Democrats rallied to support it.

But progressive Democrats bristled at the bill, and some said they could not support new work requirements for safety net programs or reward Republicans' use of the debt ceiling as a political cudgel.

"Republicans need to own this vote," said Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Democrat of New York, who took particular aim at changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and a measure to expedite production of a gas pipeline. "This was their deal. This was their negotiations. They're the ones trying to come in and cut SNAP, cut environmental protections, trying to ram through an oil pipeline through a community that does not want it."

"This has been a hostage situation," Representative Greg Casar of Texas said. "We're going to get out of the hostage situation. I appreciate the president negotiating down the ransom payment for the hostage. But I think it's appropriate for progressives to say we never want to be in this situation again."

The deal also includes measures meant to avert a government shutdown later this year.

Hard-right Republicans like Mr. Bishop described those provisions as "crumbs," saying Mr. McCarthy had failed to win the kind of deep cuts in the debt limit bill the House passed in April. That measure would have cut government programs by an average of 18 percent over a decade in exchange for raising the debt limit.

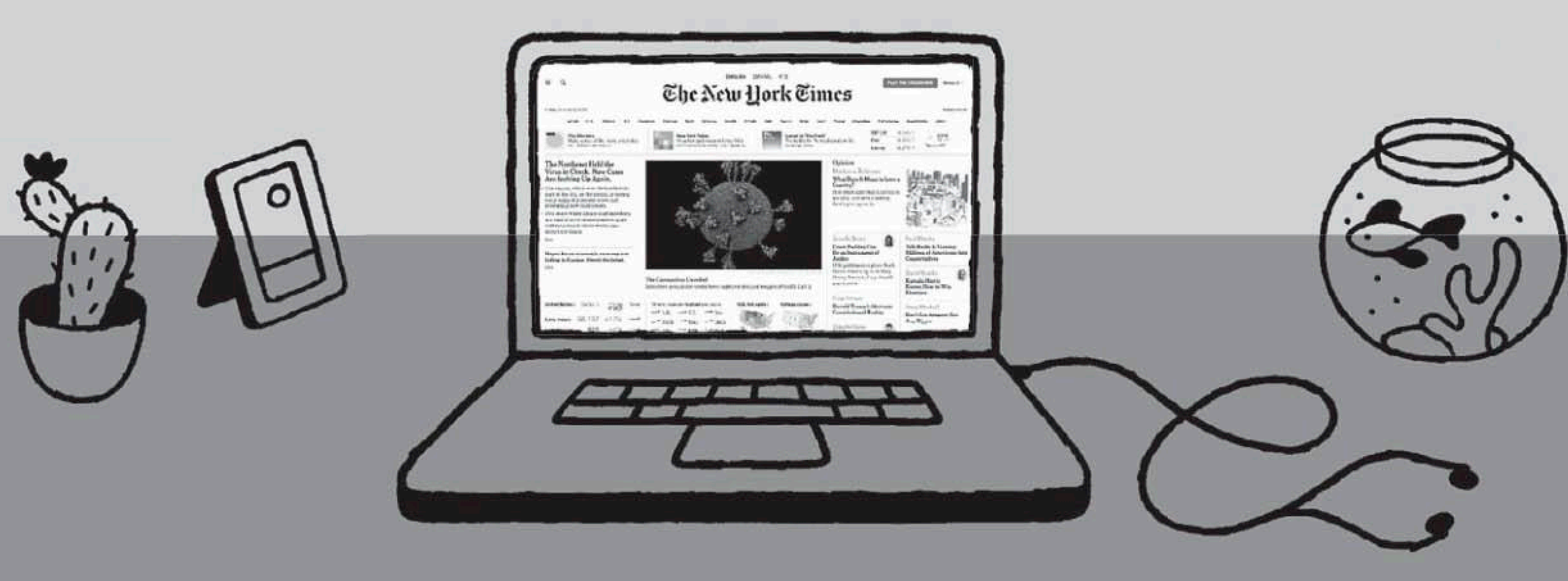
Carl Hulse and Annie Karni contributed reporting.

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Sacklers Given Shield In a Ruling That Holds Implications for Many

By JAN HOFFMAN

On Tuesday, a federal appeals court granted members of the billionaire Sackler family a legal golden key that they had been seeking for nearly four years: The Sacklers will be shielded from all civil opioid claims related to their company, Purdue Pharma, the maker of the prescription painkiller OxyContin. In exchange, they have agreed to make payments of up to $6 billion to thousands of plaintiffs in now-suspended lawsuits.

The ruling was part of a court review of a bankruptcy restructuring plan for Purdue, which filed for Chapter 11 protection in September 2019. Companies in bankruptcy customarily get protection from legal claims; owners who have not filed for personal bankruptcy usually do not.

When the company filed for bankruptcy, the Sacklers faced about 400 lawsuits over their role in Purdue's opioid business. They have long insisted that the company's liability shield should extend to them. Without such protection, they said, they would have no incentive to pay billions to settle all of the opioid cases and help their company resolve its bankruptcy.

Legal experts say that the ruling, by the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, has implications for the Purdue case specifically and for owners of companies seeking bankruptcy generally.

So is the case over?

Not yet. The ruling resolves a major hurdle on what has been a tortuous road. But before any money can be disbursed to states, communities, tribes and individuals, the latest version of the bankruptcy plan must go back to a federal district court judge, who will apply the appellate court's instructions. The plan, now in its 12th amended version, will then return to the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in White Plains, N.Y., for final approval and administration.

Given that every stage in the Purdue bankruptcy case has blown up any forecast of timing, it would be unwise to estimate how long it will be before the first check is in the mail.

What does this mean for the Sacklers?

The family has been off the Purdue board since 2018. When the bankruptcy takes effect, they will no longer be owners of the company and will receive no compensation. But they will still be very wealthy.

Some estimates have put the total Sackler fortunes at $11 billion, with a substantial amount in offshore accounts. The bulk of the payments will be disbursed over nine years, largely from proceeds on their investments, bolstered by eventual sales of their international opioid businesses.

The Sacklers have long been philanthropists, with the family name emblazoned on countless buildings, though many institutions have removed the Sackler name from public view in recent years. In the bankruptcy settlement plan, they have agreed to let American academic, medical and cultural institutions remove the Sackler name from their physical facilities, so long as the programs agree not to disparage the Sacklers.

What does this mean for Purdue?

Purdue Pharma, which aggressively marketed OxyContin as a nonaddictive, extended-release painkiller after introducing it in the 1990s, will cease to exist, and its assets will be transferred to a newly created company, to be called Knoa. It will manufacture opioid addiction treatment and opioid reversal medicines at no profit while continuing to make existing drugs like OxyContin, with those profits helping to seed settlement funds. To lower the risk that any products will be illegally diverted, Knoa will be supervised by an independent monitor.



SETH WENIG/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tributes to victims of opioid abuse outside a court in White Plains, N.Y., during Purdue Pharma's bankruptcy proceedings in 2021.

What does it mean for states, counties, cities and towns?

Over time, they will received a combined $6 billion in cash plus more from insurance settlements. Each state has its own formula for distributing the Purdue funds, but the overarching mission is for the funds to be used largely on measures to abate the opioid crisis, such as treatment and prevention programs.

What does this mean for tribes?

Each of the 574 federally recognized Native American tribes is eligible for payouts from a tribal trust set up under the settlement for about $161 million, even though not all of them sued Purdue.

What about individual victims?

A fund of between $700 million and $750 million will be distributed to individual victims and families of people who became addicted to OxyContin or died from overdoses. About 138,000 filed claims; payments are expected to range from about $3,500 to $48,000. Guardians of about 6,550 children with a history of neonatal abstinence syndrome may each receive about $7,000. Though the payouts are relatively small, this is one of the very few opioid settlements negotiated by pharmaceutical companies that sets aside money for individuals.

Will the ruling be appealed?

Not necessarily. Many states dropped their objections to the plan and the Sacklers' insistence on immunity when, after months of furious mediation, the Sacklers increased their offer by about $1.73 billion to the current estimate of $5.5 billion to $6 billion.

The strongest candidate to keep attacking Sacklers' legal shields — the underpinning of the settlement itself — is the U.S. Trustee Program, an office within the Department of Justice that serves as a watchdog over bankruptcy proceedings. The office has not commented publicly on Tuesday's ruling.

The larger issue at the heart of the case is whether a bankruptcy judge has the authority to permanently bar plaintiffs from suing company owners who haven't sought personal bankruptcy protection. The U.S. Trustee Program has long argued that doing so would deprive plaintiffs of basic due process rights.

Federal appeals courts are in conflict. The Ninth, Tenth and Fifth Circuits are among those that bar the practice in bankruptcy cases filed in their domains.

But the Sixth and Seventh Circuits have ruled that owners who contribute substantially to resolving their companies' bankruptcy restructuring can benefit from the permanent block on lawsuits against them.

The Second Circuit's bankruptcy rulings govern those cases filed in Connecticut, Vermont and, notably, New York, where the Southern District is a popular site for large bankruptcies. The Second Circuit's earlier opinions on the question have been mixed.

Now its decision in the Purdue case, which favors the Sacklers, more firmly grounds its position: The practice can continue when certain criteria have been met.

Given that the federal circuits are in disagreement, would the U.S. Trustee Program still persist in bringing the issue before the Supreme Court?

Lindsey Simon, an expert on the bankruptcy system at the University of Georgia School of Law, wouldn't rule out that possibility but was skeptical. While a lot of people hate the Sacklers and this result, she said, "states and other claimants want their money."

She added, "I don't think it's beneficial for anyone to push for this case to get unwound."

Top Oklahoma Court Blocks 2 Laws Restricting Abortion

By JACEY FORTIN

Oklahoma's Supreme Court said on Wednesday that two laws passed last year that ban most abortions are unconstitutional.

But the ruling does not affect a law passed in 1910 that still prohibits most abortions in the state, unless they are necessary to save the life of the mother.

The laws that were struck down by the court were civil laws that had relied on lawsuits from private citizens to enforce them. Both had made exceptions for cases involving a "medical emergency."

The justices took issue with that language in their 6-3 ruling, which suggested that the exceptions were too narrow. They maintained that a woman has a constitutional right to end a pregnancy in order to save her life, without specifying the need for a medical emergency.

Oklahoma is among a number of Republican-led states that moved to ban abortion in anticipation of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade last year. Legal challenges were quick to follow, and many cases ended up before state supreme courts.

Those courts have become critical arbiters in deciding abortion access, and a new political front in the nation's abortion battles. In some conservative states, courts have decided that their state constitutions protect abortion rights.

The Oklahoma decision also highlighted legal complications around how abortion restrictions and exceptions might be interpreted in cases where a woman's life is at risk. Doctors in other states with abortion bans said they have struggled to provide care for patients without breaking the law.

"We hope that this decision provides some clarity, and that doctors can move forward," said Rabia Muqaddam of the Center for Reproductive Rights, who was the lead lawyer for the groups challenging the Oklahoma laws. "Now they can provide care to patients who are facing difficult health circumstances, and they can rely on their medical judgment."

Challenges to Oklahoma's anti-abortion laws were filed by abortion rights organizations including Oklahoma Call for Reproductive Justice, a nonprofit volunteer organization based in Oklahoma City; and medical practitioners including the Tulsa Women's Reproductive Clinic.

The laws that were struck down on Wednesday had been modeled on legislation that took effect in Texas in 2021, which banned abortion after about six weeks of pregnancy and relied on civilian instead of criminal enforcement to work around court challenges.

Another law passed in Oklahoma last year, making it a felony to perform an abortion "except to save the life of a pregnant woman in a medical emergency," was struck down by the state's Supreme Court in March. In their opinion on Wednesday, the justices cited their March decision, which was similarly concerned with the potential for strict interpretations of the term "medical emergency."

Abortion is still largely illegal in Oklahoma because of the 1910 law, which came back into effect when Roe was overturned.

"Except for certain circumstances outlined in that statute, abortion is still unlawful in the State of Oklahoma," Gentner Drummond, the state's attorney general, said in a statement on Wednesday.

"This ruling, while providing clarity in emergency situations, does not change the landscape of care significantly," said Emily Wales, the president of Planned Parenthood Great Plains, which was among the organizations that challenged the laws.



SUE OGROCKI/ASSOCIATED PRESS

A rally in early May at the State Capitol in Oklahoma City. A 1910 law means abortion remains largely illegal in the state.

Pfizer R.S.V. Vaccine Gets Approval for Older Adults

By CHRISTINA JEWETT

The Food and Drug Administration on Wednesday approved Pfizer's vaccine against the respiratory syncytial virus, or R.S.V., for adults age 60 and older, the second approval granted for shots offering protection from the virus this month.

GSK was the first drugmaker to get the F.D.A.'s permission to market an R.S.V. vaccine on May 3. The vaccines are expected to be available in the fall before the winter R.S.V. season.

Each year, about 60,000 adults 65 and older are hospitalized with R.S.V. and about 6,000 to 10,000 die from the virus, the F.D.A. estimated. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that in one year, more than 21,000 people in that age group would need to take the GSK vaccine to prevent one R.S.V. death; the number was nearly 25,000 for the Pfizer shot.

The virus was a key driver in the winter's "tripledemic" of Covid, flu and R.S.V. that was particularly hard on young children, resulting in overwhelmed hospitals.

Infants and toddlers are also at elevated risk; R.S.V. is considered a leading killer of infants globally. Several treatments, including a maternal vaccine and a monoclonal antibody for infants against R.S.V., are under agency review.

During an advisory meeting on March 1 about both vaccines, doctors reviewed detailed data provided by the drugmakers.

Pfizer's product, called Abrysvo, proved nearly 67 percent effective against cases of the virus with two symptoms and 86 percent effective against cases with three or more symptoms, according to data submitted to the F.D.A. The GSK vaccine, called Arexvy, was nearly 83 percent effective against severe R.S.V.

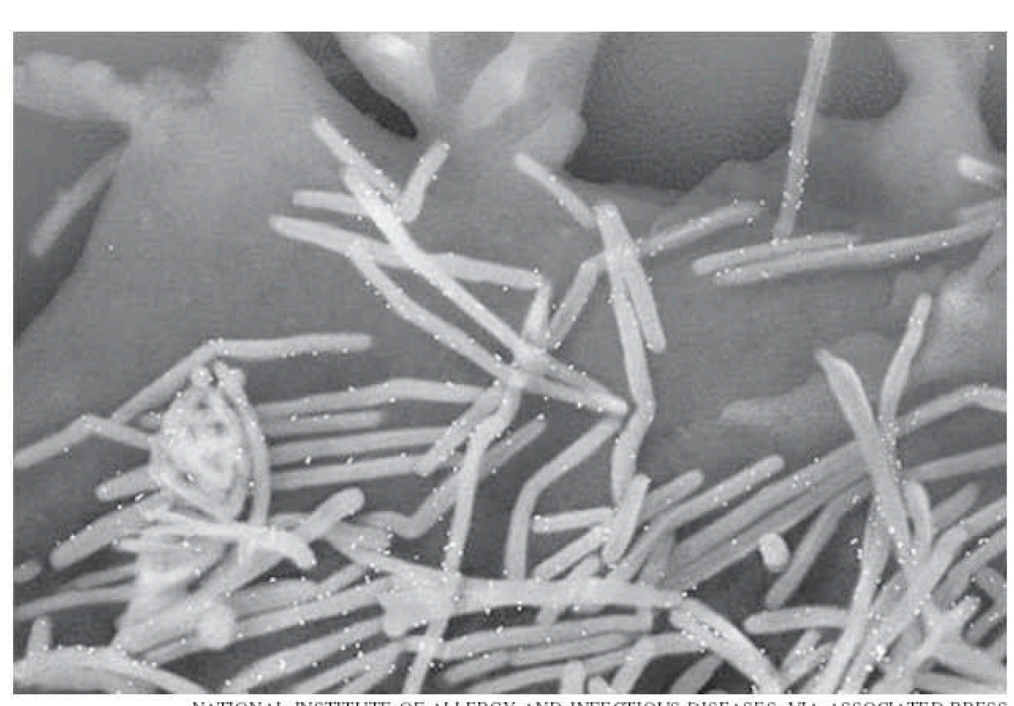
But the advisory panel also raised concerns about a few cases in which vaccine recipients developed autoimmune syndromes shortly after receiving the shots.

In a Pfizer study of about 34,000 patients who received the R.S.V. vaccine, a week after the shot, one patient developed a life-threatening case of Guillain-Barré syndrome, a condition where the immune system attacks the nervous system. A second patient developed a subtype of that condition called Miller Fisher syndrome eight days after receiving the shot.

Those cases put the incidence rate of the condition at about one in 9,000 — though they are typically seen at a rate of about one in 100,000 in the general population. Some advisers, also noting the low incidence of severe R.S.V. in the patient pool, found those numbers troubling. The final vote of the F.D.A.'s advisory panel in favor of the Pfizer vaccine's safety and efficacy was 7 to 4. The panel voted 10 to 2 in favor of the GSK vaccine, which was also linked to one Guillain-Barré case and two others of a possibly related disorder.

C.D.C. advisers are expected to discuss recommendations to health care providers about the shots in a meeting next month. So far, they have signaled that the data from the GSK and Pfizer trials support use of the vaccines in people ages 65 and older.

A Pfizer spokeswoman, Jerica Pitts, said the company was ready to ship the vaccine. She did not know the price of the vaccine but said there would be no co-payment for vaccines deemed medically necessary under Medicaid and Medicare. GSK said earlier that its vaccine would be available in the fall.



NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ALLERGY AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Each year, about 60,000 adults 65 and older are hospitalized with R.S.V. and about 6,000 to 10,000 die from the virus.

Shorter G.R.E. Test Will Be Offered as Relevance Dwindles

By STEPHANIE SAUL

The GRE, the nearly four-hour marathon of a test that has been the bane of many aspiring graduate students, is being cut in half. It will now take less than two hours.

The Educational Testing Service, the nonprofit organization that owns and administers the test, announced the changes Wednesday, tacitly acknowledging the test's declining importance in graduate school admissions.

Changes to the test, the organization said, will include the removal of an analytical writing task, 46 fewer questions on the test's quantitative and verbal reasoning sections and the elimination of an unscored section.

"These changes are intended to provide test takers with a better experience that values their time and reduces anxiety and fatigue," said the organization, which is planning to implement the changes beginning with tests administered in September.

Other changes will include the faster release of scores.

The changes reflect a general decline in the use of standardized tests, partly because of concerns among university administrators that the tests fail to predict success and that they may deter applicants from underrepresented groups.

Some studies have found that the tests handicap low-income and minority students, partly because wealthy students can improve their scores by taking expensive test prep courses. What's more, the GRE test itself is expensive — $220 in most locations.

Boston University's School of Public Health said that after it removed its GRE requirement in 2019, the number of Black and Hispanic applicants had increased, with no decline in student performance.

A growing number of graduate programs have moved to make the GRE optional or to eliminate it altogether as part of their admission requirements.

Duke University, a prestigious private institution in North Carolina, announced last year that it would not require the GRE for most of its graduate programs, extending a test-optional policy that began during the pandemic.

Calling the phenomenon the GRExit, the academic journal Science conducted a survey of 50 top-ranked graduate programs in 2019 and found that 44 percent of molecular biology Ph.D. programs had stopped requiring the scores.

At the same time, some law schools now accept GRE scores in place of the standard Law School Admission Test, or LSAT.

Even so, the number of GRE tests taken declined to 341,574 in 2021 from 541,750 in 2017.

The decline mirrors similar declines in the use of the SAT and the ACT after hundreds of colleges moved to test-optional admissions for undergraduates.

The College Board, which controls the SAT, will also move to a shorter, online test, beginning in 2024 in the United States, following its introduction in other countries this year. The new SAT will take two hours rather than three and will feature shorter reading passages with one or two questions, requiring fewer responses.

In a decision to be announced by the end of its term, the Supreme Court is widely expected to eliminate or limit the consideration of race in college admissions, meaning that undergraduate and graduate programs will no longer be permitted to give preferential treatment to underserved minority students in an effort to increase the diversity of their classes.

The decision is likely to place additional pressure on universities to limit or eliminate the use of standardized admissions exams as they move to more holistic admissions policies.

Mar-a-Lago Workers Are Said to Be Questioned About Security Footage

*This article is by **Alan Feuer, Maggie Haberman** and **Ben Protess**.*

For the past six months, prosecutors working for the special counsel Jack Smith have sought to determine whether former President Donald J. Trump obstructed the government's efforts to retrieve a trove of classified documents he took from the White House.

More recently, investigators also appear to be pursuing a related question: whether Mr. Trump and some of his aides sought to interfere with the government's attempt to obtain security camera footage from Mar-a-Lago that could shed light on how those documents were stored and who had access to them.

The search for answers on this second issue has taken investigators deep into the bowels of Mar-a-Lago, Mr. Trump's private club and residence in Florida, as they pose questions to an expanding cast of low-level workers at the compound, according to people familiar with the matter. Some of the workers played a role in either securing boxes of material in a storage room at Mar-a-Lago or maintaining video footage from a security camera that was mounted outside the room.

Two weeks ago, the latest of these employees, an information technology worker named Yuscil Taveras, appeared before a grand jury in Washington, according to two people familiar with the matter.

Mr. Taveras was asked questions about his dealings with two other Trump employees: Walt Nauta, a longtime aide to Mr. Trump who served as one of his valets in the White House, and Carlos Deoliveira, described by one person familiar with the events as the head of maintenance at Mar-a-Lago.

Phone records show that Mr. Deoliveira called Mr. Taveras last summer, and prosecutors wanted to know why. The call caught the government's attention because it was placed shortly after prosecutors issued a subpoena to Mr. Trump's company, the Trump Organization, demanding the footage from the surveillance camera near the storage room.

The call also occurred just weeks after Mr. Deoliveira helped Mr. Nauta move boxes of documents into the storage room — the same room that Mr. Deoliveira at one point fitted with a lock. The movement of the boxes into the room took place at another key moment: on the day before prosecutors descended on Mar-a-Lago for a meeting with Mr. Trump's lawyers intended to get him to comply with a demand to return all classified documents.

The Trump Organization ultimately turned over the surveillance tapes, but Mr. Smith's prosecutors appear to be scrutinizing whether someone in Mr. Trump's orbit tried to limit the amount of footage produced to the government.

They asked Mr. Taveras an open-ended question about if anyone had queried him about whether footage from the surveillance system could be deleted.

It remains unclear what investigators learned from questioning Mr. Taveras in front of the grand jury and whether they were able to make any headway in their efforts to determine if steps had been taken to interfere with the handing over of the surveillance tapes.

But the focus on the tapes is the latest effort by Mr. Smith to determine whether Mr. Trump or his aides engaged in any sort of obstructive behavior. Prosecutors are examining whether the former president has in effect been playing games with government officials in different agencies for more than a year — including the Justice Department, which issued a subpoena for all classified documents in Mr. Trump's possession in May 2022, and the National Archives, which sought to retrieve reams of presidential records from Mr. Trump that he held onto after leaving office, some of which included classified material.

There is no indication that Mr. Taveras is a subject of Mr. Smith's investigation. His lawyer, Stanley Woodward Jr., declined to comment.

Trying to determine how Trump handled sensitive documents.

Mr. Deoliveira's lawyer, John Irving, did not respond to a message seeking comment.

All three men — Mr. Taveras, Mr. Deoliveira and Mr. Nauta — have been questioned extensively by prosecutors over their roles in handling the boxes and the tapes. Mr. Trump's aides maintain that nothing nefarious took place, and that activities that prosecutors are treating with suspicion were simply part of efforts to comply with the subpoenas or were routine conversations that happened without the participants knowing in some cases about the existence of the subpoenas issued by the Justice Department for the security footage and for the classified documents in Mr. Trump's possession.

Nonetheless, one person briefed on the events said the interactions concerning the security tapes were enough to arouse suspicion among Mr. Smith's investigators. Moreover, people briefed on witness interviews say, it has become clear that Mr. Smith views a number of people connected to Mr. Trump with skepticism.

Both Mr. Irving and the lawyer representing Mr. Nauta and Mr. Taveras, Mr. Woodward, are being paid by Mr. Trump's political action committee, Save America, which itself has been under scrutiny by Mr. Smith's team. Prosecutors are looking into whether the group raised money from donors by claiming it would be earmarked for legal challenges to the 2020 election, but that Mr. Trump's aides knew he had lost.

The Washington Post reported on Tuesday about a conversation between an unnamed I.T. worker and an unnamed maintenance worker at Mar-a-Lago.

Mr. Taveras's grand jury appearance was not the first time that Mr. Smith's team has focused on the question of how the security tapes at Mar-a-Lago were handled. Prosecutors have also issued subpoenas to Matthew Calamari Sr. and his son, Matthew Calamari Jr., who have long overseen security issues for the Trump Organization.

The prosecutors have sent separate subpoenas to the company seeking surveillance footage from Mar-a-Lago, people with knowledge of the matter said. The first such subpoena was issued last June, and since then, prosecutors have sent several more subpoenas for a wider array of footage, one person with knowledge of the matter said.

The prosecutors appear to have sought the footage in order to get a clearer picture of the movement of the boxes of documents at Mar-a-Lago. But there were gaps in the footage, the person said, and the prosecutors have also been examining whether someone intentionally stopped the tape or if technological issues caused the gap.

The prosecutors have also subpoenaed a software company that handles all of the surveillance footage for the Trump Organization, including at Mar-a-Lago, The New York Times previously reported.

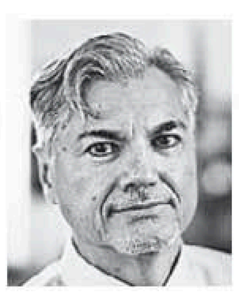
Trump Seeks New Judge For Hush-Money Case

By WILLIAM K. RASHBAUM and BEN PROTESS

Former President Donald J. Trump is asking the judge overseeing his criminal case in Manhattan to step aside, citing ties between the judge's family and Democratic causes, Mr. Trump's lawyers said in a statement Wednesday.

The motion for recusal, which has not yet been filed publicly, represents the latest effort by Mr. Trump's lawyers to move his case away from the judge, Juan M. Merchan of State Supreme Court in Manhattan.

The Trump legal team also recently sought to shift the case, brought by the Manhattan district attorney, to federal court. On Tuesday, the district attorney, Alvin L. Bragg, filed court papers opposing that effort, and he is expected to oppose the effort to get Justice Merchan to recuse himself.



Trump defense lawyers say the current judge, Juan M. Merchan, has ties to Democratic causes.

Mr. Bragg's case centers on a hush-money payment to a porn star in the last days of the 2016 presidential campaign. The $130,000 payment, made by Mr. Trump's former fixer, bought the silence of the porn star, who was otherwise poised to tell her story of a sexual encounter with Mr. Trump.

Mr. Trump has denied the accusations against him — that he falsified records to cover up the potential sex scandal — and has lashed out at both Mr. Bragg and Justice Merchan, noting that both are Democrats.

"President Trump, like all Americans, is entitled under the Constitution to an impartial judge and legal process," Mr. Trump's lawyers, Susan R. Necheles and Todd W. Blanche, said in a statement on Wednesday announcing the decision to seek Justice Merchan's recusal.

Yet their motion to recuse faces something of an uphill climb: The decision rests in the hands of Justice Merchan, who also presided over the unrelated tax fraud trial last year of Mr. Trump's company. The company's lawyers sought Justice Merchan's recusal in that case as well, but he declined to step aside.

The company was convicted in December, and Justice Merchan ordered the maximum punishment, a fine of $1.6 million.

In the statement on Wednesday, Mr. Trump's lawyers cited Justice Merchan's actions in that case, in which they said he encouraged Mr. Trump's former chief financial officer, Allen H. Weisselberg, to cooperate against the former president and his company.

Although the full details of their arguments were not immediately clear because the motion has not yet been publicly filed, their statement outlined concerns about what they said were Justice Merchan's political ties.

Justice Merchan's daughter, they noted, is a partner and the chief operating officer of Authentic Campaigns, a Democratic consulting firm that did work for President Biden's 2020 campaign. The firm, they said, "stands to benefit financially from decisions Judge Merchan may make in this case."

Under New York State rules on judicial conduct, a judge should disqualify himself or herself from a case if a relative within the sixth degree had "an interest that would be substantially affected by the proceeding." Ms. Merchan's work on Democratic campaigns does not give her enough of an interest to qualify, according to experts.

But in their statement, Mr. Trump's lawyers also seized on modest personal donations that Justice Merchan had made to Democratic campaigns. During the 2020 presidential election, Justice Merchan donated $15 to the Democratic group Act Blue earmarked for Mr. Trump's opponent, Joseph R. Biden Jr., as well as $10 each to two other Democratic groups, including one called "Stop Republicans."

Justice Merchan has been under the protection of armed court officers at least since a grand jury voted to indict Mr. Trump on March 30, according to a person familiar with the arrangements.

The lawyers plan to file the motion for recusal later this week, after the prosecutors in Mr. Bragg's office have a chance to review it and seek any redactions.

A spokeswoman for Mr. Bragg's office said prosecutors would review the motion and respond in court papers. Justice Merchan declined to comment through a spokesman for the state Office of Court Administration. (State rules prohibit a judge from commenting publicly on any pending case.)

Corrections

FRONT PAGE

An article on Tuesday about a teen's killing in North Dakota that became a right-wing talking point misstated the party registration of the parents of Shannon Brandt. Mr. Brandt's parents are not registered with a political party. North Dakota does not have statewide voter registration. A picture caption with the article referred imprecisely to an argument between Mr. Brandt and Cayler Ellingson. While the two men were at Buck's n Doe's Bar & Grill before Mr. Ellingson's death, it is not clear where the argument happened.

INTERNATIONAL

An article on Wednesday about rising political tensions in Germany over a new climate bill misspelled the name of the secretary general of the Free Democrats. He is Bijan Djir-Sarai, not Bijan Sjir-Sarai.

SPORTS

An article on Wednesday about the Boston Celtics misstated the timing of the debut of the Celtics player Robert Williams III following a knee injury. His first game was in December, not in April.

ARTS

An article on Tuesday about television shows similar to "Succession" misidentified the creator of "The Thick of It." He is Armando Iannucci, not Jesse Armstrong.

An article on Tuesday about the series finale of "Succession" misidentified the vehicle Tom and Shiv were in. It was a Maybach, not an Escalade.

Errors are corrected during the press run whenever possible, so some errors noted here may not have appeared in all editions.



RACHEL MUMMEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida on Wednesday in Salix, Iowa. His challenge is to set himself apart without alienating G.O.P. voters.

DeSantis Delivers Pokes at a Rival, but Cautiously

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though he has drawn implicit contrasts.

The two-pronged approach reflects the remarkable degree to which his pathway to the nomination depends on his ability to win over — and not alienate — the significant bloc of Republican voters who still like Mr. Trump even if they are willing to consider an alternative.

"I don't like to see them battle and do smear campaigns," said Jay Schelhaas, 55, a professor of nursing who came to see Mr. DeSantis on Wednesday in Pella, Iowa. An evangelical voter, he said he was undecided on whom to support in 2024 after backing Mr. Trump in his past presidential runs.

Some themes have emerged in Mr. DeSantis's early broadsides. He has sought to question Mr. Trump's commitment to conservatism ("I do think, unfortunately, he's decided to move left on some of these issues"); his ability to execute his agenda ("I've been listening to these politicians talking about securing the border for years and years and years"); and his ability to win the 2024 general election ("There are a lot of voters that just aren't going to ever vote for him").

It was no coincidence that Mr. Trump arrived in Iowa on Mr. DeSantis's heels on Wednesday, in a sign of the intensifying political skirmish between the leading Republican presidential contenders and the centrality of Iowa in their paths to the nomination. Mr. Trump holds an advantage of roughly 30 percentage points in early national polls of the Republican primary.

In a statement, Steven Cheung, a spokesman for Mr. Trump, said that Mr. DeSantis's first speech was "crafted to appease establishment Never Trumpers who are looking for a swamp puppet that will do their bidding."

Mr. DeSantis is seeking a challenging middle ground as he begins this new, more confrontational phase. He is trying to show voters that he is the kind of fighter who will not back down — even against his party's dominant figure. At the same time, he must avoid being seen as overly concentrated on Republican infighting.



BRIAN F. SNYDER/REUTERS

An image of former President Donald J. Trump in Des Moines. He planned a visit to Iowa to closely follow Mr. DeSantis's visit.

"I'm going to focus my fire on Biden," Mr. DeSantis said at his kickoff speech on Tuesday night in Clive, a suburb of Des Moines, even as he stepped up his attacks on Mr. Trump. "And I think he should do the same."

Advisers to Mr. DeSantis said his more assertive posture stemmed largely from the fact that he is now an actual candidate. But it is a notable shift. At a recent dinner with donors in Tallahassee, Fla., Mr. DeSantis was asked when he would start slugging Mr. Trump, and he suggested he would not be doing so immediately, according to an attendee, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe a private conversation.

For the third time in Mr. DeSantis's three trips to Iowa this year, Mr. Trump planned to follow close behind with a two-day swing of his own. In March, when Mr. DeSantis came for his book tour, Mr. Trump arrived days later in the same city and drew a bigger crowd. In mid-May, Mr. Trump had scheduled a rally to stomp on the Florida governor's trip, though he canceled at the last minute, saying it was because of the weather. It was Mr. DeSantis who one-upped him then, appearing at a barbecue joint nearby.

"The weather was so nice that we felt we just had to come," Mr. DeSantis said to laughs in Clive.

Mr. Trump was scheduled to do a local television interview on Wednesday, and on Thursday he planned to host a lunch with religious leaders in Des Moines after attending a breakfast with a local Republican group. He is also holding a Fox News town hall event moderated by Sean Hannity.

Mr. Trump has been far from subtle in his attacks on Mr. DeSantis, calling him "Ron DeSanctimonious," denouncing his leadership of Florida and lashing him from the left for past proposals to trim Social Security and Medicare spending. No matter how much mud Mr. Trump slings, Republican voters have tended not to punish him, a double standard that has long worked to his advantage.

"I guess he's got to respond in some way," Tim Hamer, a retired Iowan who worked in banking and owned a lavender farm, said of Mr. DeSantis. Mr. Hamer, who was at the governor's event in Council Bluffs on Wednesday, said he had voted for Mr. Trump in 2016 and 2020 but was now leaning toward Mr. DeSantis

"The point is," he added, "don't descend to Trump's level."

Among the issues over which Mr. DeSantis has explicitly broken with Mr. Trump is the legislation the former president signed that allows a pathway for nonviolent offenders to shrink their prison time. Last week, Mr. DeSantis called the measure "a jailbreak bill."

In stop after stop, Mr. DeSantis has pointed to his ability to serve as president for two terms, unlike Mr. Trump, saying that the next president could appoint as many as four Supreme Court justices.

Regina Hansen, who attended the DeSantis event in Council Bluffs, said she wished Mr. Trump and Mr. DeSantis would patch up their once friendly relationship. But in the meantime, she said, she thought the best way for Mr. DeSantis to win over Trump supporters was to keep talking about himself, his record and his family.

"I have a very positive opinion of him, more so now than I did before I came here today," Ms. Hansen said after hearing Mr. DeSantis speak.

But Will Schademann, who came to the rally with a copy of Mr. DeSantis's recent book, said he believed the governor needed to stay on the attack against the former president.

"I just think it's the right approach," said Mr. Schademann, who added he voted twice for Mr. Trump. "He needs to contrast what he did with what Trump did."

At his stops on Wednesday in Council Bluffs, Salix and Pella, Iowa, Mr. DeSantis directed his verbal assaults at President Biden and kept his swipes at Mr. Trump more oblique.

"Our great American comeback tour starts by sending Joe Biden back to his basement in Delaware," he said in Council Bluffs.

In contrast, Mr. DeSantis criticized Mr. Trump, a former reality television star, indirectly though pointedly.

"The Bible makes very clear that God frowns upon pride and looks to people who have humility," he said.

In recent days, Mr. DeSantis has seemed eager to discuss his handling of the coronavirus, which vaulted him to national prominence. Mr. Trump recently unfavorably compared the governor's handling of the pandemic to that of former Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, Democrat of New York.

Mr. DeSantis has expressed shock at this line of attack, arguing that closures and isolation measures instituted early in the pandemic did more harm than help.

"The former president would double down on his lockdowns from March of 2020," Mr. DeSantis said.

"Do you want Cuomo or do you want free Florida?" he added. "If we just decided the caucuses on that, I would be happy with that verdict by Iowa voters."

Trump on Tape Talking of Secret Document He Had After Leaving Office

*This article is by **Maggie Haberman**, **Jonathan Swan** and **Alan Feuer**.*

Federal prosecutors investigating former President Donald J. Trump's handling of classified material have a recording of Mr. Trump from 2021 discussing a sensitive military document he had kept after leaving the White House, two people briefed on the matter said.

The recording, in which Mr. Trump also indicated he knew the document was secret, could undermine his repeated claim that he had already declassified material that remained in his possession after he left office. Prosecutors are scrutinizing whether Mr. Trump obstructed efforts by federal officials to retrieve documents he took with him after leaving office and whether he violated laws governing the handling of classified material.

The existence of the recording was reported earlier by CNN.

The tape was made during a meeting Mr. Trump held in July 2021 with people helping his former chief of staff, Mark Meadows, write a memoir of his 10 months in the White House, according to the people briefed on the matter. The meeting was held at Mr. Trump's club at Bedminster, N.J., where he spends summers.

Until now, the focus of the documents investigation has been largely on material Mr. Trump kept with him at Mar-a-Lago, his private club and residence in Florida, rather than in New Jersey.

Mr. Meadows did not attend the meeting, but at least two of Mr. Trump's aides did. One, Margo Martin, routinely taped the interviews he gave for books being written about him that year.

On the recording, Mr. Trump began railing about his handpicked chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Mark A. Milley, who was described in media accounts at the time as having guarded against Mr. Trump's striking Iran in the final days of the presidency, according to the people briefed on the matter.

Mr. Trump then began referencing a document that he had with him, saying that it had been compiled by General Milley and was related to attacking Iran, the people briefed on the matter said. Among other comments, he mentioned his classification abilities during the discussion, one person briefed on the matter said. Mr. Trump can be heard handling paper on the tape, though it is not clear whether it was the document in question.

The Justice Department obtained the recording in recent months, a potentially key piece in a mountain of evidence that prosecutors have amassed under the special counsel, Jack Smith, since he was appointed in November to oversee the federal investigations into Mr. Trump.

Ms. Martin was asked about the recording during a grand jury appearance, according to two of the people briefed on the matter.

Steven Cheung, a spokesman for Mr. Trump, said in a statement that "leaks from radical partisans behind this political persecution are designed to inflame tensions and continue the media's harassment of President Trump and his supporters." He accused prosecutors of interfering with the 2024 election through the investigation, which began in early 2022.

In total, the government has recovered more than 300 documents with classified markings from Mr. Trump since he left office. They include a first batch of documents returned in January of last year to the National Archives, another set provided by Mr. Trump's aides to the Justice Department that June, material seized by the F.B.I. in the search of Mar-a-Lago in August and a handful found in additional searches late last year.

One set of documents found by the F.B.I. during the search had the highest level of classification, top secret/sensitive compartmented information.

Mr. Trump has long touted what he claimed was his ability to automatically declassify materials and has even said he could do so with his mind.

His allies have insisted he had a standing order to declassify material when he took it from the Oval Office to the White House residence, a claim that several former senior administration officials have suggested is nonsense. Members of his legal team have cautioned his aides not to lean too heavily on that argument as a defense in the documents case.

The recording is a key piece of evidence held by prosecutors.

That claim was raised most vocally by Kash Patel, a close adviser to Mr. Trump who testified to a grand jury under an immunity deal forced on him by prosecutors.

The recording obtained by the special counsel's office could help prosecutors undercut any argument by Mr. Trump that the documents he had taken from the White House upon leaving office were declassified. It could also assist them in making a case that Mr. Trump was aware that his abilities to possess — and to show off — classified materials were limited.

Moreover, one of the laws cited by the Justice Department in seeking the warrant used to search Mar-a-Lago last year, known as the Espionage Act, was enacted by Congress during World War I, decades before President Harry S. Truman issued an executive order creating the modern classification system for the executive branch.

As a result, the Espionage Act makes no reference to whether a document has been deemed classified. Instead, it makes it a crime to retain, without authorization, documents related to the national defense that could be used to harm the United States or aid a foreign adversary.

Investigators have been asking witnesses about General Milley in various interviews for several weeks, although they have generally left unclear what they were looking for.

Investigators have several if not all of the recordings of book interviews that Mr. Trump gave, according to two of the people familiar with the events.

In one interview, Mr. Trump said he had taken "nothing of great urgency" when asked if he had anything in his possession.

Mr. Trump has equivocated when asked if he ever showed any classified documents to people once he left the White House. At a CNN town hall event in May, he said, "Not really. I would have the right to. By the way, they were declassified after."

Mr. Meadows, in his book, appeared to echo Mr. Trump's claim about General Milley.

"The president recalls a four-page report typed up by Mark Milley himself," the book said. "It contained the general's own plan to attack Iran, deploying massive numbers of troops, something he urged President Trump to do more than once during his presidency. President Trump denied those requests every time."

Yet according to a person familiar with the document in question, the report was not written by General Milley and in fact dates to an earlier period in the Trump administration, when Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr. was the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Jim Mattis was the defense secretary.

General Milley has been interviewed by investigators about the matter, according to one person briefed on the discussion.

Climate Disasters Force Insurers to Stop Offering Policies in Certain States



MAX WHITTAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A firefighter in Echo Summit, Calif., in 2021. State Farm said last week that it would stop selling coverage to California homeowners.

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homeowners in California than any other company, said it would stop accepting applications for most types of new insurance policies in the state because of "rapidly growing catastrophe exposure."

The company said that while it recognized the work of California officials to reduce losses from wildfires, it had to stop writing new policies "to improve the company's financial strength." A State Farm spokesman did not respond to a request for comment.

Insurance rates in California jumped after wildfires became more devastating than anyone had anticipated. A series of fires that broke out in 2017, many ignited by sparks from failing utility equipment, exploded in size with the effects of climate change. Some homeowners lost their insurance entirely because insurers refused to cover homes in vulnerable areas.

Michael Soller, a spokesman for the California Department of Insurance, said the agency was working to address the underlying factors that have caused disruption in the insurance industry across the country and around the world, including the biggest one: climate change.

He highlighted the department's Safer From Wildfires initiative, a fire resilience program, and noted that state lawmakers are also working to control development in the areas at highest risk of burning.

But Tom Corringham, a research economist with the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California San Diego who has studied the costs of natural disasters, said that allowing people to live in homes that are becoming uninsurable, or prohibitively expensive to insure, was unsustainable.

He said that policymakers must seriously consider buying properties that are at greatest risk, or otherwise moving residents out of the most dangerous communities.

Jill Cowan and Ivan Penn reported from Los Angeles.

"If we let the market sort it out, we have insurers refusing to write new policies in certain areas," Dr. Corringham said. "We're not sure how that's in anyone's best interest other than insurers."

A Broken Model

California's woes resemble a slow-motion version of what Florida experienced after Hurricane Andrew devastated Miami in 1992. The losses bankrupted some insurers and caused most national carriers to pull out of the state.

In response, Florida established a complicated system: a market based on small insurance companies, backed up by Citizens Property Insurance Corporation, a state-mandated company that would provide windstorm coverage for homeowners who couldn't find private insurance.

For a while, it mostly worked. Then came Hurricane Irma.

The 2017 hurricane, which made landfall in the Florida Keys as a Category 4 storm before moving up the coast, didn't cause a particularly great amount of damage. But it was the first in a series of storms, culminating in Hurricane Ian last October, that broke the model insurers had relied on: One bad year of claims, followed by a few quiet years to build back their reserves.

Since Irma, almost every year has been bad.

Private insurers began to struggle to pay their claims; some went out of business. Those that survived increased their rates significantly.

More people have left the private market for Citizens, which recently became the state's largest insurance provider, according to Michael Peltier, a spokesman. But Citizens won't cover homes with a replacement cost of more than $700,000, or $1 million in Miami-Dade County and the Florida Keys.

That leaves those homeowners with no choice but private coverage — and in parts of the state, that coverage is getting harder to find, Mr. Peltier said.

'Just Not Enough Wealth'

Florida, despite its challenges, has an important advantage: A steady influx of residents who remain, for now, willing and able to pay the rising cost of living there. In Louisiana, the rising cost of insurance has become, for some communities, a threat to their existence.

Like Florida after Andrew, Louisiana's insurance market started to buckle after insurers began leaving following Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Then, starting with Hurricane Laura in 2020, a series of storms pummeled the state. Nine insurance companies failed; people began rushing into the state's own version of Florida's Citizens plan.

The state's insurance market "is in crisis," Louisiana's insurance commissioner, James J. Donelon, said in an interview.

In December, Louisiana had to increase premiums for coverage provided by its Citizens plan by 63 percent, to an average of $4,700 a year. In March, it borrowed $500 million from the bond market to pay the claims of homeowners who had been abandoned when their private insurers failed, Mr. Donelon said. The state recently agreed to new subsidies for private insurers, essentially paying them to do business in the state.

Mr. Donelon said he hoped that the subsidies would stabilize the market. But Jesse Keenan, a professor at Tulane University in New Orleans and an expert in climate adaptation and finance, said the state's insurance market would be hard to turn around. The high cost of insurance has begun to affect home prices, he said.

In the past, it would have been possible for some communities — those where homes are passed down from generation to generation, with no mortgages required and no banks demanding insurance — to go without insurance altogether. But as climate change makes storms more intense, that's no longer an option.

"There's just not enough wealth in those low-income communities to continue to rebuild, storm after storm," Dr. Keenan said.

A Shift to Risk-Based Pricing

Even as homeowners in coastal states face rising costs for wind coverage, they're being squeezed from yet another direction: Flood insurance.

In 1968, Congress created the National Flood Insurance Program, which offered taxpayer-backed coverage to homeowners. As with wildfires in California and hurricanes in Florida, the flood program arose from what economists call a market failure: Private insurers wouldn't provide coverage for flooding, leaving homeowners with no options.

The program achieved its main goal, of making flood insurance widely available at a price that homeowners could afford. But as storms became more severe, the program faced growing losses.

In 2021, FEMA, which runs the program, began setting rates equal to the actual flood risk facing homeowners — an effort to better communicate the true danger facing different properties, and also to stanch the losses for the government.

Those increases, which are being phased in over years, in some cases amount to enormous jumps in price. The current cost of flood insurance for single-family homes nationwide is $888 a year, according to FEMA. Under the new, risk-based pricing, that average cost would be $1,808.

And by the time current policyholders actually have to pay premiums that reflect that full risk, the impacts of climate change could make them much higher.

"Properties located in high-risk areas should plan and expect to pay for that risk," David Maurstad, head of the flood insurance program, said in a statement.

The best way for policymakers to help keep insurance affordable is to reduce the risk people face, said Carolyn Kousky, associate vice president for economics and policy at the Environmental Defense Fund. For example, officials could impose tougher building standards in vulnerable areas.

Government-mandated programs, like the flood insurance plan, or Citizens in Florida and Louisiana, were meant to be a backstop to the private market. But as climate shocks get worse, she said, "we're now at the point where that's starting to crack."

Aides From Trump White House Are Subpoenaed in Firing of an Election Security Expert

By MAGGIE HABERMAN and JONATHAN SWAN

The special counsel investigating former President Donald J. Trump's efforts to cling to power after he lost the 2020 election has subpoenaed staff members from the Trump White House who may have been involved in firing the government cybersecurity official whose agency judged the election "the most secure in American history," according to two people briefed on the matter.

The team led by the special counsel, Jack Smith, has been asking witnesses about the events surrounding the firing of Christopher Krebs, who was the Trump administration's top cybersecurity official during the 2020 election. Mr. Krebs's assessment that the election was secure was at odds with Mr. Trump's baseless assertions that it was a "fraud on the American public."

Mr. Smith's team is also seeking information about how White House officials, including in the Presidential Personnel Office, approached the Justice Department, which Mr. Trump turned to after his election loss as a way to try to stay in power, people familiar with the questions said.

The investigators appear focused on Mr. Trump's state of mind around the firing of Mr. Krebs, as well as on establishing a timeline of events leading up to the attack on the Capitol by a pro-Trump mob on Jan. 6, 2021. The latest subpoenas, issued roughly two weeks ago, went to officials in the personnel office, according to the two people familiar with the matter.

Mr. Krebs enraged Mr. Trump when his agency, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, released a statement nine days after the 2020 election attesting to the security of the results. The statement added a sharp rebuke — in boldface type — to the unfounded conspiracy theories that Mr. Trump and his allies were spreading about compromised voting machines.

"There is no evidence that any voting system deleted or lost votes, changed votes or was in any way compromised," the statement from Mr. Krebs's agency read.

Five days later, Mr. Trump tweeted that Mr. Krebs was "terminated" after releasing a "highly inaccurate" statement about the 2020 election.

Mr. Krebs later testified to the House select committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol that before his firing, he was aware of "skepticism" among Trump allies about his "loyalty to the president."

It was far more than skepticism. Within the Presidential Personnel Office, a small group of Trump loyalists, led by Mr. Trump's former personal aide, John McEntee, were on a mission to find and fire people perceived as disloyal to Mr. Trump within the federal bureaucracy. And they had fingered the outspoken Mr. Krebs, who had been appointed by Mr. Trump himself, as among the ranks of the disloyal.

Staff members within the personnel office had drafted a document about Mr. Krebs that outlined reasons to distrust him. The memo, first reported by Jonathan Karl of ABC News, detailed a litany of Mr. Krebs's alleged sins against Mr. Trump, including: "Wife posted a family photo on Facebook with the 'Biden Harris' logo watermarked at the bottom."

Mr. Smith's team is asking witnesses about broader efforts made by Mr. Trump's personnel officials to test the loyalty of federal officials and potential hires, the people briefed on the matter said. Mr. McEntee was seen going into the grand jury in recent months.



Christopher Krebs

Months before the 2020 election, Mr. McEntee, now the head of a dating app for conservatives, and a deputy sought to overhaul the government's hiring process. They developed what became known by some officials as "the loyalty test" — a new questionnaire for government hires that asked such questions as "What part of Candidate Trump's campaign message most appealed to you and why?"

Mr. Krebs is among those whom Mr. Smith's team has interviewed, according to a person familiar with the matter. Mr. Krebs declined to comment when contacted.

Mr. Smith's team has also been trying to figure out how the personnel office interacted with the Justice Department as Mr. Trump grasped at any available instrument within his bureaucracy that might help him subvert the 2020 election result.

In his final weeks in office, Mr. Trump grew increasingly frustrated with the department's leaders as one after another rebuffed his pressure on them to falsely declare that large-scale voter fraud had occurred in swing states, such as Georgia, that Mr. Trump had lost to Mr. Biden.

By the time the election took place, Heidi Stirrup, a loyalist close to Mr. Trump's policy adviser, Stephen Miller, had been installed as the White House liaison at the Justice Department. Mr. Smith's office has asked questions about her role, one of the people briefed on the matter said.

Ms. Stirrup was banned from entering the Justice Department building a month after the 2020 election, after she tried to glean sensitive information from department officials about efforts to hunt for election fraud, according to officials with knowledge of the episode.

Soon after, Attorney General William P. Barr, whom Mr. Trump had long seen as an ally, resigned after telling Mr. Trump that his election fraud theories were bogus and that the legal team he had assembled to challenge the results was a "clown show." Jeffrey A. Rosen, who replaced Mr. Barr, also refused to follow Mr. Trump's orders to use the machinery of the Justice Department to overturn the election.

Jeffrey B. Clark, the acting head of the civil division, was the one senior Justice Department official who embraced Mr. Trump's efforts to overturn the election.

Mr. Clark has been the focus of investigators' attention as well in connection with his role in helping Mr. Trump's efforts to reverse the election outcome.

Trial Opens for Ex-N.Y.P.D. Sergeant Accused of Doing China's Bidding

By KAREN ZRAICK

On a fall day in 2018, two men drove from Brooklyn to a home in a New Jersey suburb. They pounded on the front door. They went to the back deck and peered inside the glass doors. Finally, they taped a note for a former Chinese government official hiding inside with his wife.

"If you are willing to go back to the mainland and spend 10 years in prison, your wife and children will be safe and sound," it read.

Whether the men were China's agents or its unwitting pawns is the central question in a landmark case that began in Brooklyn federal court on Wednesday. It is the first trial related to what China calls Operation Fox Hunt, a global effort that the authoritarian government says is aimed at fugitives, but which U.S. prosecutors say is intended to stamp out dissent using extortion and intimidation.

Three defendants are Michael McMahon of New Jersey, a retired New York Police Department sergeant turned private investigator; Yong Zhu, also known as Jason Zhu, of Queens; and Congying Zheng of Brooklyn. The government says Mr. Zheng was one of the men who delivered the letter, using an address provided by Mr. Zhu and Mr. McMahon.

All are charged with acting as unlawful agents of China, interstate stalking and conspiracy. They face up to 10 years in prison.

Orville Schell, director of the Center on U.S.-China Relations at the Asia Society, said that the proceedings, which are expected to last two to three weeks, would illuminate China's efforts to control speech outside its borders.

Eight were charged in plot to harass Chinese citizens in the U.S.

"These trials are more than just trials about a few people," he said. "We get to look within the interior of how this system of control from Beijing works."

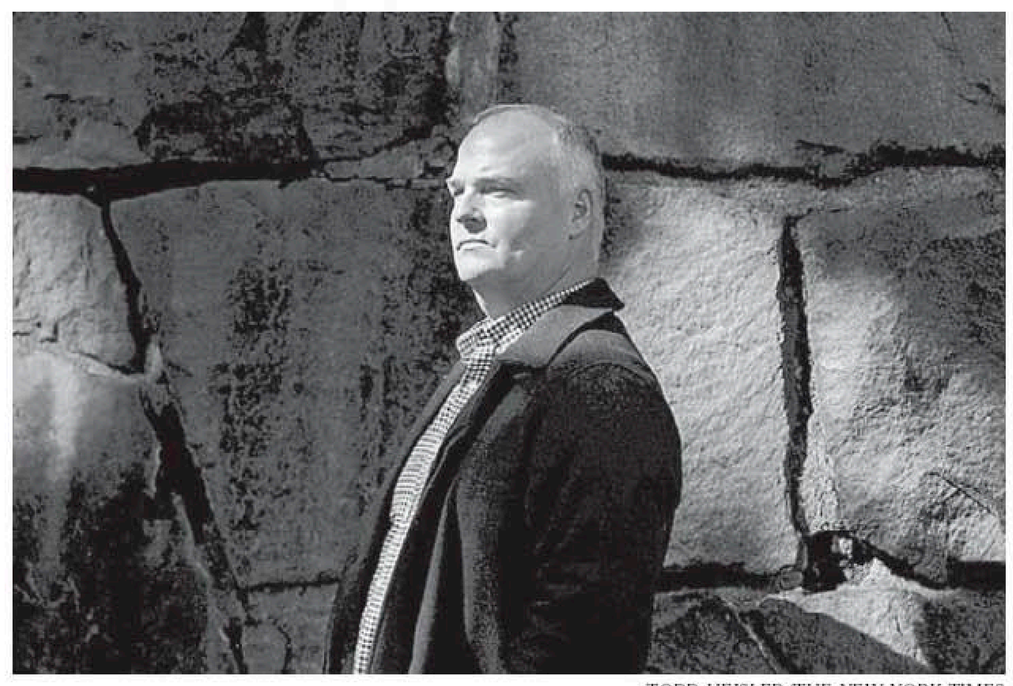
When the case was announced, Christopher Wray, the director of the F.B.I., called it an example of "China's ongoing and widespread lawless behavior — and our refusal to tolerate it."

Prosecutors say the three men on trial targeted Xu Jin, the former official in New Jersey. Mr. Xu had fallen out of the Communist Party's favor around 2008, and moved to the United States about two years later, Irisa Chen, an assistant U.S. attorney, said in her opening statement. He had resisted many attempts to get him to return, so in 2016, the Chinese government sought to locate him using illegal tactics, she said.

To that end, Mr. Zhu hired Mr. McMahon to find out where he lived, the government charges.

Lawrence Lustberg, a lawyer for Mr. McMahon, in his opening statement called his client a decorated "hero cop" unaware that he had been working for China. Mr. McMahon contends that he was hired to find someone he was told had embezzled millions from a Chinese construction company. He kept detailed records and alerted the local police when he conducted surveillance in New Jersey, Mr. Lustberg said.

"If he's secretly acting on behalf of the Chinese government, is he going to call the cops and tell them that?" Mr. Lustberg asked.



TODD HEISLER/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Michael McMahon, a retired New York Police sergeant turned private investigator, has said he was an unwitting pawn.

Paul Goldberger, representing Mr. Zheng, said that his client had never met his co-defendants before the charges were filed. The man with whom he drove to New Jersey in 2018, Kuang Zebin, pleaded guilty last year and is expected to testify. Mr. Goldberger argued that Mr. Zheng had quickly realized his involvement was a mistake, and went back the following morning to take the note down.

"It's less than 24 hours altogether that he was supposedly involved," he said.

Kevin Tung, representing Mr. Zhu, said his client had met someone at a job fair in Wuhan, China, who asked for help tracking down a debtor in the United States. Because Mr. Zhu does not speak English, he found a lawyer, who in turn hired Mr. McMahon, he said.

"My client is also a victim," Mr. Tung said. "He was used."

The indictment lays out a scheme in which the Chinese government flew Mr. Xu's octogenarian father to the United States to persuade his son to return — or at least reveal his address.

Mr. Xu's sister-in-law, Liu Yan, testified Wednesday about a bizarre episode at her home in Short Hills, N.J., in April 2017. She was walking the dog one evening when her teenage daughter called to say that Mr. Xu's father — who lived in Wuhan, and whom she had met only three or four times — was at their home.

Liu Yan said that the family knew that Mr. Xu was wanted for "things he did not do," and suspected his father's unexpected presence was part of a scheme to find him, she said. She arranged for Mr. Xu to meet them at a mall the following morning, instead of at his home.

Mr. McMahon monitored the meeting, and obtained Mr. Xu's address after that, prosecutors said.

"Thanks to Mr. McMahon, the Chinese government finally learned where the victim lived," Ms. Chen said.

The New York Times



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Juan Carlos Formell, 59, Buoyant Heir of a Cuban Musical Legacy, Dies

By ALEX WILLIAMS

Juan Carlos Formell, an acclaimed singer-songwriter who settled in New York after defecting from Cuba and eventually took over as bassist for his famous father, Juan Formell, in Los Van Van, one of the most influential bands of post-Revolutionary Cuba, died on Friday during a performance in New York City. He was 59.

His death, from a heart attack he suffered onstage at the Lehman Center for the Performing Arts in the Bronx, was confirmed by his romantic and musical partner, Danae Blanco. Mr. Formell had hypertension and arteriosclerosis, she said.

Since fleeing Cuba for New York City in 1993, Mr. Formell had charted his own musical course, releasing five solo albums and earning a Grammy nomination in 2000 for best traditional tropical Latin performance for his debut album, "Songs from a Little Blue House."

When his father died in 2014, Mr. Formell agreed to carry on his legacy as the bassist for Los Van Van, the Afro-Cuban dance band co-founded by his father. The band's current lineup also includes his brother Samuel on drums and his sister Vanessa on vocals.

The band was just a few numbers into an energetic set at the Lehman Center when Mr. Formell wandered away from his upright bass, doubled over as if to catch his breath, then lumbered toward the rear of the stage. As the band played on, Abdel Rasalps Sotolongo, the Van Van singer known as Lele, and Javier León Peña, a sound engineer, were helping him offstage when he collapsed near the curtain.

The band took a break for more than half an hour, then made a brief announcement that Mr. Formell was having a health problem, and returned to finish the set, playing for nearly an hour, a friend, the musician Ned Sublette, who was present, said in a phone interview.

Mr. Formell was a fourth-generation member of one of Cuba's most famous musical families. His great-grandfather Juan Francisco was a popular bandleader. His grandfather Francisco Formell was a conductor of the Havana Philharmonic and the arranger for the Lecuona Cuban Boys, a popular big band starting in the 1930s.



WICKLOW, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Juan Carlos Formell in an undated photograph. The singer-songwriter released five solo albums and was nominated for a Grammy in 2000 for best traditional tropical Latin performance for his debut album, "Songs from a Little Blue House," right.

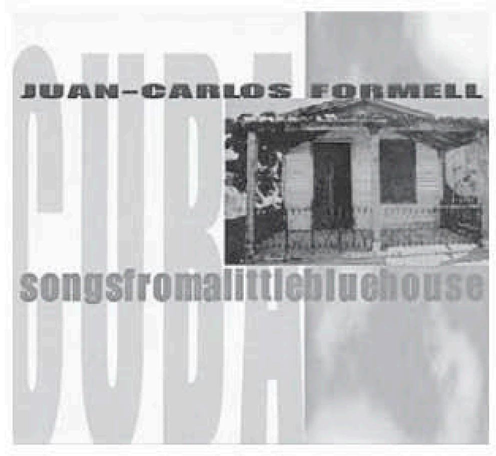
His father, Juan Formell, along with fellow giants of Cuban music, César Pedroso, known as Pupy, and José Luis Quintana, known as Changuito, founded Los Van Van in 1969, fusing traditional Afro-Cuban genres like son cubano with elements of rock, soul and disco.

With the blessing of the Cuban government, the band toured the world for decades, developing a global following. It won a Grammy Award in 2000 for best salsa performance for their album "Llego . . . Van Van/Van Van is Here.")



BRIAN HARKIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Los Van Van in 2010. Mr. Formell joined the band in 2014 after his father, who was a founder, died. The current lineup includes his brother Samuel on drums and his sister Vanessa on vocals.



Despite his family name, Mr. Formell's path to musical success was not easy.

Juan Carlos Formell was born in Havana on Feb. 18, 1964, the eldest of three children of Juan Formell and the cabaret singer Natalia Alfonso.

When he was 3 weeks old, his parents sent him to live on the outskirts of Havana with his paternal grandparents. His grandfather, the conductor, had been ostracized by the Castro government for being part of the old guard. Mr. Formell told The Los Angeles Times in 2000 that he had been teased by other children for having holes in his shoes.

Nonetheless he set his course toward music, studying at the Alejandro García Caturla and Amadeo Roldán conservatories in Havana, and later at Cuba's National Art School.

By his teens, he was already composing and studying bass with Andres Escalona of the Havana Symphony Orchestra. He went on to play bass with the jazz pianist Emiliano Salvador.

He was also a talented guitarist and hoped to carve out a career as a singer-songwriter, influenced by Afrocubanismo, the Cuban artistic movement focused on Black identity, as well as the negrista movement in poetry, particularly the work of Nicolás Guillén. Even so, he felt unable to express himself freely under the restrictions of the government-controlled Cuban music industry, his former wife, Dita Sullivan, said in an email.

"While still in my 20s, at a time when most musicians are full of hope," he said in a 2001 radio interview, "I was resigned to a future of marginalization."

In 1993, while on tour with the dance band Conjunto Rumbavana in Mexico, he defected, crossing the Rio Grande near Laredo, Texas, and eventually settling in New York City. The transition was not easy.

His style was rooted in filin, a genre deeply influenced by jazz, as well as son cubano.

"When you leave Cuba, you don't exist," Mr. Formell said in a 2005 interview with The Chicago Sun-Times. "You come here, you're invisible. You come here and no one cares. If you want to defect, you'd better have a support system."

He built a career performing solo and with various ensembles at New York jazz clubs before releasing his Grammy-nominated debut. He followed with "Las Calles del Paraíso" ("The Streets of Paradise") in 2002 and "Cemeteries & Desire," a 2005 rumination on the Latin musical flavorings of New Orleans, along with "Son Radical" (2006) and "Johnny's Dream Club" (2008), which a Village Voice review said wove "an unforgettable spell."

Mr. Formell's music, rooted in filin, a romantic, jazz-inflected genre of Cuban popular music, as well as son cubano, a traditional style mixing Spanish and African influences, celebrated the natural beauty of his homeland as well as its complicated history.

"Although my songs don't specifically talk about politics," he said in a 1996 interview, "they reflect the reality of Cuba from my perspective and not from the perspective of the system."

In addition to Samuel and Vanessa, his survivors include his other sisters, Elisa Formell Alfonso and Paloma Formell Delgado, and another brother, Lorenzo Formell González. He and Ms. Sullivan separated in 2012 and divorced in 2021.

In a Facebook post announcing his death, Los Van Van said it would continue its tour of the United States, "paying tribute to Juan Carlos in every performance, every musical note, in every Vanvanero choice as Juanca would have wanted."

Deaths

Fleischman, Elisabeth
Good, David
Lewis, Vivian
Nadel, Norman
Pascopella, Fred
Schneeweiss, Stephen
Spielman, Phyllis
Weber, Stephen
Weiss, Thirell
Worth, Robert

FLEISCHMAN—Elisabeth "Lisa" Claudy.



Elisabeth "Lisa" Claudy Fleischman, 64, of Chevy Chase, MD, and Teton Village, WY, passed away in her home on Saturday, May 27, 2023, after a five-year battle with cancer. She was surrounded by family and loved ones. Lisa was born in Washington, DC, in 1958 to Donald Edwin Claudy and Elizabeth Osborne Claudy. Her brother Peter was born three years later. After Washington, the family lived in Hudson, OH, Greenwich, CT, and London, England, following Mr. Claudy's law career at Covington & Burling, Firestone Tire & Rubber Company, and Standard Oil, later called Exxon. Lisa attended St. Paul's Girl's School in London before moving to St. Paul's School in Concord, NH, for her final years of high school. Lisa is predeceased by her mother, father, and brother. Lisa attended Harvard College where she graduated cum laude with a concentration in Psychology. She dedicated her career to consulting for and supporting non-profit institutions, receiving both a Master's in Public and Private Management and a Master's in Business Administration from Yale University. She worked in philanthropic consulting for Brakeley, John Price Jones, Thomas Harris & Associates, and J.C. Geever & Co. before joining the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, as the Assistant Director of Development. Thereafter, Lisa worked tirelessly to support non-profits directed at women's development, art, and the environment with organizations such as the Washington Area Women's Foundation, Green Door, the Grand Teton National Park Foundation, the National Museum of Wildlife Art, and the National Museum of Women in the Arts. Lisa met her husband, Charles "Chuck" Mark Fleischman, when they were both sophomores at Harvard College. This past March marked 45 years since their first date. The two married in June 1988. As a couple, Lisa and Chuck were a team in every sense of the word. They were always aligned on their vision for their family and balanced each other out in everything from their interests, to their talents, and to their music taste. Together, Chuck and Lisa created a loving home for their two children, son Philip born in 1991, and daughter Joan in 1994. Her children were the greatest joy in her life. The family raised their children in Chevy Chase, MD, as Chuck's work brought him to the Washington, DC, area to serve as President and CFO of Digene Corporation. Chuck and Lisa sent their kids to Sidwell Friends School, a community which Lisa loved dearly. She served multiple stints as head of the Parent's Association at Sidwell, constantly striving to promote the school's values of education and love for all members of the school. Throughout Lisa's life, she found friendship and solace in the arts. She loved to sing, play piano, and listen to music. In high school and college she acted in plays and musicals. She then dedicated much of her professional life to working with museums and other organizations championing the arts, and specifically women in the arts. Her most recent efforts included a feature on Five Wyoming Women Artists to Watch which was published by the Wyoming Committee of the National Museum of Women in the Arts. This piece can be found here. (https://wywf.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/WYWomenArtistsToWatch.pdf) Chuck and Lisa also built a community around their home in Teton Village, WY. Avid lovers of the outdoors, the two found incredible friends on the slopes of Jackson Hole Mountain Resort and on the hiking trails of Grand Teton National Park. Lisa combined her love of the outdoors, the arts, and giving back with her work in this community. She served multiple terms on the board of the Grand Teton National Park Foundation and worked as a docent for the National Museum of Wildlife Art. What is harder to put into words than Lisa's many accomplishments is the goodness she brought to the world in everything she did. She was graceful and selfless and wholeheartedly committed to the people in her life. She emanated love and light in her every gesture and she was constantly looking to build bridges and provide love to those around her. To know her was to feel awash in her sense of righteousness, her desire for good, and her lifelong journey to make the world a better place. With the loss of Lisa, the world has lost a woman who was pure in her devotion to her friends and family, but also to the greater wellbeing of us all. Her family is left without its North Star and emotional anchor, but trusts that the values she instilled will guide them in her absence. Lisa is survived by her husband Chuck, her son Philip, and her daughter Joan; her sister-in-law Patricia Claudy Schade, nephew Henry Claudy, and niece India Claudy; sister-in-law Janet Fleischman, brother-in-law Joel Solomon, niece Shayna Solomon, and niece Jamie Solomon. Celebrations of Lisa's life will be held in Washington, DC and Jackson, WY. In lieu of flowers, please take a minute to honor Lisa's spirit by helping someone else in need, or consider donating to these institutions that were so important to Lisa and to the well-being of the entire world: Grand Teton National Park, National Museum of Women in the Arts, National Museum of Wildlife Art.
https://www.gtnpf.org/donate/
https://secure.nmwa.org/donate/i/donate
https://www.wildlifeart.org/support/donate

GOOD—David R., age 66, of Hazlet, NJ, died of cardiac arrest on January 23, 2023. A renowned geotechnical engineer, Dave was often hired for complex projects that required creative problem solving. He spent 43 years at MRCE, ultimately as a Principal Engineer. Dave graduated from NJIT (BS/MS) and served on its Industrial Advisory Board, establishing the 3D-Printed Bridge Competition to promote STEM in schools. A wildly inventive, passionate and driven person, Dave was an avid hiker, a skilled carpenter, and a loving partner, father and friend. Dave is survived by his long-term partner, Paige Evans, his children, Melissa, Michael and Morgan, and his brothers, Martin and William. Those who wish can donate to the NJIT Scholarship established in Dave's name: "The Foundation at NJIT," designating the David R. Good PE, '78, 92 Memorial Scholarship on the check. NJIT Office of Development & Alumni Relations - Eberhardt Hall, 323 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, Newark, NJ 07102.

LEWIS—Vivian. We note with sorrow the passing of our longtime member, Vivian Lewis and extend sincerest condolences to her bereaved family.

Rabbi Angela Buchdahl
and President
Shonni Silverberg, MD
Central Synagogue
of New York City

NADEL—Norman, of Hartsdale, NY, on May 30, 2023 at age 91. Attorney at law. Survived by daughters Melissa Weissman and Victoria Nadel and brother Joshua and his wife Liz. Beloved by son-in-law Steven Weissman and three grandchildren: Nicole, Lauren, and Brendan. Predeceased by wives Ilene and Sandra and brother, Lawrence. Donations in his memory may be made to the Anti-Defamation League.

PASCOPELLA—Fred. Former head of New York City Bureau of Bridges Fred Pascopella passed away at age 86. Student of Evander Childs High School and NYU, Fred worked for the state DOT and New York City department of bridges before consulting for LiRo Construction. He married Gale Hilliard, whom he met at Eastchester Presbyterian Church, and had three children. He relished in simple pleasures, including Giacomo Puccini music, wine and food. For full obit, JJFFH.com.

SCHNEEWEISS—Dr. Stephen M., President Emeritus of Cazenovia College, 1975-1995, passed March 22, 2023 at the age of 87. He is survived by his wife of 64 years Carol and his three sons, David, Marc (April), Jonathan and grandson Carter and sister Irma Rudnick. He graduated with a Doctor of Education at Columbia University and owned several nursing facilities. He was also instrumental in the development of health services programs at multiple colleges.

SPIELMAN—Phyllis Roberts. It is with great sadness that the Spielman and Turkel families announce that Phyllis Roberts Spielman died peacefully at her home on Tuesday, May 30th. Funeral services will be held on Sunday, June 4th at 10:30am at Congregation Beth Elohim in Park Slope, Brooklyn.

WEBER—Stephen.



Stephen Robert Weber, a businessman, philanthropist, and beloved husband and father, died on Sunday, May 28. A longtime Boston resident, he was 85 and passed peacefully in his sleep at his summer home in Stockbridge, MA. He was born in Kansas City, MO, the son of the late Bertram and Leah Weber. He attended Southwest High School in Kansas City, and graduated as an engineering major from the University of Pennsylvania in 1960. Two years later, he earned an MBA from the Harvard Business School, where he was a Baker Scholar. He began his business career at Waddell & Reed, moved on to G.S. Grumman & Associates, and then to Jennison Associates. He returned to Grumman, which became Cowen & Company and then SG-Cowen Securities Corp. He retired as managing director of SG-Cowen in 2005. A generous benefactor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, he was elected a Trustee of the BSO in 2002 and served as vice chair from 2010 to 2015. In 2017, he became a Life Trustee. He had a particular love for Tanglewood, the BSO's summer home in the Berkshires, just down the road from his home in Stockbridge. In addition to classical music, he enjoyed contemporary art, and served as Board Chair of the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania. He was an avid fan of Boston professional sports teams. He leaves his wife of 55 years, Dr. Dorothy Altman Weber; daughter, Meredith Weber Blitstein and son-in-law Alexander Blitstein of Somerville; and brother-in-law, Dr. Lawrence K. Altman of New York City. Funeral services will be held on Friday, June 2, 2023 at 1pm at Levine Chapels (470 Harvard St, Brookline, MA). Burial will follow at the Sharon Memorial Park in Sharon, MA. Visiting hours will be held at the Weber residence in Boston: after graveside services until 8pm on Friday; on Saturday from 7:30pm- 9:30pm; and on Sunday from 1pm-4:30pm and 7-9pm. They will continue at the Weber residence in Stockbridge from 4-8pm on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Boston Symphony Orchestra www.bso.org); Combined Jewish Philanthropies (www.ma.cjp.org); and 18 Degrees - Kids 4 Harmony (www.18degreesma.org/how-we-help/kids-4-harmony

WEISS—Thirell Marilyn, 91, of New York, NY, passed away peacefully in her home on May 29th, surrounded by her family. Thirell was born on October 2, 1931 to Thirell and Richard A. Lipsey in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. After graduating from the University of Washington, Thirell travelled to London, England to teach grade school, stopping on the way in Boston where she met Harvey Weiss. Upon her return from England several years later, she and Harvey married. They lived in Washington, DC and Manhattan before settling in Haworth, NJ. They had three daughters, Deborah, Adrienne, and Susan (who died as an infant). Thirell created a beautiful home, filled with love, antiques, plants, and delicious aromas from her superb cooking. A talented pianist, she was a beloved piano teacher, introducing a generation of children to the joys of music. She was an active member of the Haworth Women's Club and the Haworth Tennis team and was a lifelong bridge player. She and Harvey enjoyed decades of chamber music concerts, opera, ballet performances, and museums together. When they moved back to the Upper West Side in 2017, she derived enormous pleasure from being able to walk from their apartment to performances at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. Thirell is survived by her beloved husband Harvey Weiss, daughters Deborah Weiss of Austin, TX and Adrienne Frechter of Breckenridge, CO, sons-in-law Edward Markovitz and Allen Frechter, grandchildren Daniel Frechter, Serena Frechter, Susannah Frechter, Kathryn Markovitz, and Nora Markovitz, her brother Richard G. Lipsey of Vancouver, Canada, and many nieces and nephews. Service will be held at Frank E. Campbell, 1076 Madison Ave., New York on Friday, June 2 at 11am. Burial will be private. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to The American Cancer Society.

WORTH—Robert R., died on Tuesday, May 30 at his home in Manhattan at age 92. A full obituary to follow.

In Memoriam

BOYK—James W.
June 1, 1943 - June 7, 2019
Jim's family and friends wish he were here to celebrate his 80th birthday with us. The variety and vivacity of his life are recorded at:
www.BoykOnPiano.com
for all to see and hear and remember. We miss him dearly.

Carol, David, Daniel
and Barbara

HALLINGBY—Paul, Jr.
Eternally Yours,
Jo, Charlie & Chloe Jane

PERLMAN—Meg Jo.
1/18/50 - 6/1/21
Two years later, missing you every day, Meg. Truly, deeply, always in our hearts.

Love, Jake and Doug

SAUNDERS—Thomas A. III
In remembrance of your 87th birthday. Dearly loved, forever missed.

Jordan

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Opinion

The New York Times

COLUMNIST | NICHOLAS KRISTOF

Mississippi Is Offering Lessons for America on Education

JACKSON, MISS.

THE REFRAIN ACROSS much of the Deep South for decades was "Thank God for Mississippi!" That's because however abysmally Arkansas or Alabama might perform in national comparisons, they could still bet that they wouldn't be the worst in America. That spot was often reserved for Mississippi.

So it's extraordinary to travel across this state today and find something dazzling: It is lifting education outcomes and soaring in the national rankings. With an all-out effort over the past decade to get all children to read by the end of third grade and by extensive reliance on research and metrics, Mississippi has shown that it is possible to raise standards even in a state ranked dead last in the country in child poverty and hunger and second highest in teen births.

In the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a series of nationwide tests better known as NAEP, Mississippi has moved from near the bottom to the middle for most of the exams — and near the top when adjusted for demographics. Among just children in poverty, Mississippi fourth graders now are tied for best performers in the nation in NAEP reading tests and rank second in math.

The state has also lifted high school graduation rates. In 2011, 75 percent of students graduated, four percentage points below the national average; by 2020, the state had surpassed the national average of 87 percent by one point.

"Mississippi is a huge success story and very exciting," David Deming, a Harvard economist and education expert, told me. What's so significant, he said, is that while Mississippi hasn't overcome poverty or racism, it still manages to get kids to read and excel.

"You cannot use poverty as an excuse. That's the most important lesson," Deming added. "It's so important, I want to shout it from the mountaintop." What Mississippi teaches, he said, is that "we shouldn't be giving up on children."

The revolution here in Mississippi is incomplete, and race gaps persist, but it's thrilling to see the excitement and pride bubbling in the halls of de facto segregated Black schools in some of the nation's poorest communities.

This column is part of a series I'm writing about how we can help those whom America has left behind. One reason for my interest is the loss of an old school friend when she froze to death while homeless. Since then, I've lost too many friends I grew up with to drugs, alcohol and suicide, and as I think about what might have saved their lives, education is high on the list.

But an education system can save people only when it manages to educate them, and America too often falls short. I had heard Mississippi cited for its progress, but frankly, I was skeptical until I visited. On my second day in Jackson, where 98 percent of public school students are people of color, mostly from low-income families, I visited a second-grade classroom.

The class was reading a book, "The Vegetables We Eat." The children read aloud and debated what vegetables were. Things that are green? Foods that don't taste good? I was startled to see second graders read words like "vegetables" and "eggplant" fluently and still more astonished to see the entire class easily read the sentence "Where does nourishing food come from?"

Mississippi has achieved its gains despite ranking 46th in spending per pupil in grades K-12. Its low price tag is one reason Mississippi's strategy might be replicable in other states. Another is that while education reforms around the country have often been ferociously contentious and involved battles with teachers' unions, this education revolution in Mississippi unfolded with support from teachers and their union.

"This is something I'm proud of," said Erica Jones, a second-grade teacher who is the president of the Mississippi affiliate of the National Education Association, the teachers' union. "We definitely have something to teach the rest of the country."

MISSISSIPPI'S SUCCESS HAS no single origin moment, but one turning point was arguably when Jim Barksdale decided to retire in the state. A former C.E.O. of Netscape, he had grown up in Mississippi but was humiliated by its history of racism and underperformance.

"My home state was always held in a low regard," he told me. "I always felt embarrassed by that."

Barksdale cast about for ways to improve education in the state, and in 2000 he and his wife contributed $100 million to create a reading institute in Jackson that has proved very influential. Beyond the money, he brought to the table a good relationship with officials such as the governor, as well as an executive's focus on measurement and bang for the buck — and these have characterized Mississippi's push ever since.

With the support of Barksdale and many others, a crucial milestone came in 2013 when state Republicans pushed through a package of legislation focused on education and when Mississippi recruited a new state superintendent of education, Carey Wright, from the Washington, D.C., school system. Wright ran the school system brilliantly until her retirement last year, meticulously ensuring that all schools actually carried out new policies and improved outcomes.

One pillar of Mississippi's new strategy was increasing reliance on phonics and a broader approach to literacy called the science of reading, which has been gaining ground around the country; Mississippi was at the forefront of this movement. Wright buttressed the curriculum with a major push for professional development,



PHOTOGRAPHS BY TRENT BOZEMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The state shows that poverty is no excuse for failing to teach kids to read.

with the state sending coaches to work with teachers, especially at schools that lagged.

The 2013 legislative package also invested in pre-K programs, targeting low-income areas. Mississippi made the calculated decision to offer high-quality full-day programs, with qualified teachers paid at the same rate as elementary school staff members, rather than offer a second-rate program to more children.

The pre-Ks get children started on recognizing letters, numbers and sounds, and more important, they help kids adjust to classrooms. In one pre-K that I visited, a girl named Allyson was wreaking havoc as the teacher tried to talk to the class about light and shadow.

Most of the class was sitting on the floor and enthusiastically answering the teacher's questions. Meanwhile, Allyson was running around the classroom, trying to see if she could run faster than her shadow.

"Every classroom has an Allyson," another teacher said with a sigh. All the early-grade teachers I spoke to said that the



Allysons of Mississippi are less disruptive and more ready to learn after attending pre-K.

Perhaps the most important single element of the 2013 legislative package was a test informally called the third-grade gate: Any child who does not pass a reading test at the end of third grade is held back and has to redo the year.

This was controversial. Would this mean holding back a disproportionate share of Black and brown children from low-income families, leaving them demoralized and stigmatized? What about children with learning disabilities?

In fact, the third-grade gate lit a fire under Mississippi. It injected accountability: Principals, teachers, parents and children themselves were galvanized to ensure that kids actually learned to read. Each child's progress in reading is carefully monitored, and those who lag — as early as kindergarten and ramping up in second and third grades — are given additional tutoring.

In classrooms, I saw charts on the wall showing how each child — identified by a number rather than a name — ranks in reading words per minute. Another line showed which children, also noted by number, were green (on track to pass) and which were yellow (in jeopardy). Then there were some numbers representing children who were red and urgently needed additional tutoring and practice.

As third grade progresses in Mississippi, there is an all-consuming focus on ensuring that every child can read well enough to make it through the third-grade gate. School walls fill with posters offering encouragement from teachers, parents and students alike.

"Blow this test out of the water," wrote Torranecia, a fifth grader, in a typical comment.

In the town of Leland in the Mississippi Delta, one of the poorest parts of America, parents and family members come early on the day of the big exam and line a hallway at the elementary school, cheering madly as the kids walk through to take the test — like champion football players taking the field. And when I visited, 35 new bicycles were on display in the school gym, donated by the community to be awarded by lottery to those who passed.

Those who did not pass would get a second chance at the end of the school year. Children who fail this second try are urged to enroll in summer school as a last desperate effort to raise reading levels. Those who fail a third time are held back — about 9 percent of third graders — although there is a chance for a good-cause exemption if, for example, a child has a learning disability or speaks limited English.

What happens to the children forced to repeat third grade? A Boston University study this year found that those held back did not have any negative outcomes such as increased absences or placement in special education programs. On the contrary, they did much better several years later on sixth-grade English tests compared with those who had just missed being held back. Gains from being held back were particularly large for Black and Hispanic students.

With such a focus on learning to read, one of the surprises has been that Mississippi fourth graders have also improved significantly in math. One possible explanation is that some math problems require reading; another is that children try harder in all subjects when they enjoy school.

The state and the Barksdale Reading Institute also partnered in experimenting with approaches that failed; in those cases, they measured the results and dropped methods that didn't show gains.They tried to lure family members into visiting schools through drop-in centers, and few showed up. They tried to introduce approaches through teacher training in universities, and this proved expensive and much less successful than dispatching coaches to offer guidance in the classrooms.

Mississippi is also striking for what it did not do. For example, it didn't reduce class sizes: Officials weighed the evidence and concluded that while smaller classes would improve outcomes, spending the money on teacher coaching and student tutoring would help even more.

Nothing worked quite as expected, and everything was harder than it looked. But Mississippi kept testing and tweaking its model, following the evidence where it led. And now second graders can read "nourishing."

MANY WHITE FAMILIES fled the Mississippi public school system around the time courts forced integration in 1970, so 48 percent of public school students were Black in 2018-19 and 44 percent white — with three-quarters of all pupils labeled economically disadvantaged.

One challenge is that while Mississippi has made enormous gains in early grades, the improvement has been more modest in eighth-grade NAEP scores. Still, the state has made progress in several areas that help upper grades: getting parents more involved and promoting vocational education, in addition to raising high school graduation rates.

The school superintendent in the town of Hollandale, Mario Willis, told me his high school graduation rate was 97 percent, and he explained how his school fights to keep kids. The other day, he said, he had a call from the high school principal about an 18-year-old senior who was dropping out.

The student lived in poverty and had a single mom who was unemployed, so the family's economic situation was desperate. Not seeing a way out, the young woman left school and took a restaurant job.

That's when the school went all out to bring the student back. School officials repeatedly visited the young woman at home. They spoke to her mother, and they talked her employer into arranging work hours for her after school.

So now she is back in school, on track to graduate.

OTHER STATES, PARTICULARLY Alabama, have adopted elements of Mississippi's approach and have improved outcomes — but not nearly as much as Mississippi has. Perhaps that's because those states' leaders didn't work as hard or because Alabama until recently didn't have a must-pass third-grade reading test, but it's also true that Mississippi has been guided by a visionary leadership team that may be difficult to recreate elsewhere.

Barksdale recruited Kelly Butler, a former teacher, to run his reading institute, and she provided much of the vision for the state. Two Teach for America veterans, Rachel Canter and Sanford Johnson, in 2008 founded an organization called Mississippi First that has been a tireless advocate of raising standards.

All of these education leaders, along with Superintendent Wright, reinforced one another and brought in others with fresh ideas who were utterly committed to lifting Mississippi standards — and as state test results improved, politicians responded with pride and allocated more funds to the cause. Last year, Mississippi passed a major increase in teacher pay.

Since so much of the debate about K-12 education is about teachers' unions and whether they prevent improvement, let me make the point that the states with arguably the best public schools (such as Massachusetts and New Jersey) have strong teachers' unions while the state with some of the most-improved schools (Mississippi) has weak teachers' unions. We needn't get bogged down by debates over unions.

The education reform movement that for decades captured the imagination of tech executives, documentary makers and presidents from Ronald Reagan to Barack Obama and Donald Trump has fizzled. We no longer hear presidents and opinion makers regularly describe education as the civil rights issue of our time. Many people seem to have given up and moved on.

Mississippi is one answer to that sense of exhaustion and futility. And other states are noticing. The publication Education Week reported that 31 states have passed legislation on evidence-based reading instruction. Many school systems, most recently New York City's, are adopting the science of reading, based partly on the success in Mississippi and elsewhere.

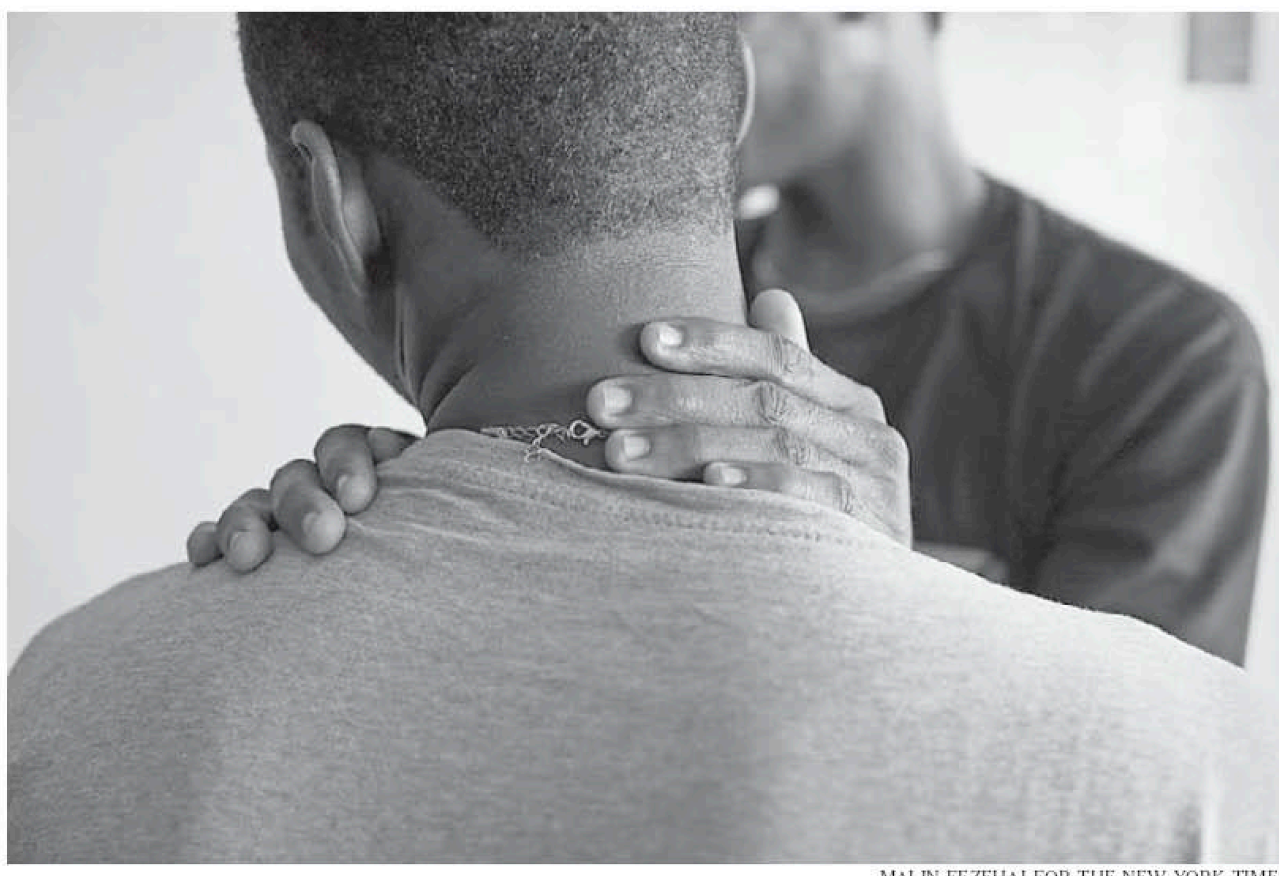
Education reformers have often thought it hopeless to tackle state public school systems directly and so have pursued the equivalent of bank shots: Run effective charter schools, for example, and public schools can adopt lessons learned. Mississippi raises the question of whether we truly need bank shots. Or maybe for the United States, the whole state of Mississippi is the ultimate bank shot.

The Barksdale Reading Institute is developing a free online tool, Reading Universe, to make the state's approach to reading available to all schools in America and around the world. The idea is that kids everywhere should have the same opportunities to learn and graduate as, say, students in high-poverty schools in the Delta.

Thank God for Mississippi.

When Your Sexuality Is a Crime

Maddie Bender
A recent Yale graduate who traveled to West Africa for this essay as the winner of Nicholas Kristof's contest for a college student to report abroad.



MALIN FEZEHAI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE

WHEN Abdul was a teenager and coming to terms with being gay, he was attacked by a group of men. They mocked him with homophobic slurs and assaulted him with broken beer bottles, slicing his thumb open.

He reported the attack to the police. They told him that an arrest could be made — of him, for homosexuality.

Sierra Leone is one of more than 30 African nations (over half the continent) that criminalize same-sex relations. While most of the gay people I spoke with here did not seem to fear arrest, they said they faced widespread discrimination in housing, employment and family life.

Meanwhile, American conservative Christian organizations with records of fighting L.G.B.T.Q. rights have poured millions of dollars into Africa, according to a 2020 report. Some American evangelicals have been known to encourage anti-L.G.B.T.Q. legislation in countries such as Uganda.

Queer issues are deeply personal to me, since I am bisexual. While L.G.B.T.Q. people still suffer danger and discrimination in America, traveling with Nick Kristof offered me a window into the immense adversity queer people experience in West Africa — and their resilience and courage in the face of it.

But Africa is not uniformly homophobic, and I found some friendly physical and virtual space emerging. In São Tomé and Príncipe, an island nation off the west coast of Africa, homosexuality has been legal since 2012. "Sexuality is free," the prime minister, Patrice Trovoada, told me, adding that in his country, "you don't have this hate attitude" toward gay people.

Still, it's complicated. Members of an association for gay men in São Tomé say L.G.B.T.Q. people in the country have suffered violence and been ostracized from their families. The group's president, Kelve Borros, 28, told me, "Nothing about life is easy."

In Sierra Leone, I met two dozen queer people inside a community center run by the Dignity Association, a local advocacy group. The center's warmth reminded me of a support group I belonged to in high school, where I had my first kiss with a girl.

Outside, the atmosphere was chillier. Although people were happy to talk about homosexuality when I asked, most said they'd never encountered a gay person. But in 2013, the Sierra Leonean government estimated that around 20,000 (and possibly more) men who have sex with men live in the country. Statistics for queer women are fuzzier.

Spending time online may be broadening some people's views. A 2020 review of Africans' attitudes toward homosexuality suggests that frequent internet users are more likely to be tolerant of gay people.

Two teenagers in the city of Makeni in northern Sierra Leone, Fatmata Binta Jalloh, 17, and Marie Kamara, 16, told me that while they believe homosexuality doesn't exist in their country, they've seen plenty of gay people online. They recalled a TikTok video of a lesbian couple celebrating after conceiving a child through in vitro fertilization. The video, they said, made them happy for this couple, whose sexuality they had been taught to fear.

Even where being gay is legal in Africa, life is not easy for L.G.B.T.Q. people.

For L.G.B.T.Q. youth like Abdul, online content can be a kind of lifeline. He follows queer celebrities on Instagram, including the musician Sam Smith and the rapper Rashad Spain (known as Saucy Santana), and aspires to a level of success that can also partly insulate him from violence and homophobia.

When asked about the queer representation that Sierra Leone's young people may see online, the country's president, Julius Maada Bio, compared external influences to the contagion of gun violence. Because of technology, he said, "'copycatting' becomes very easy," and he worried that outside information "poses a serious threat to our own culture and way of life."

I'd like to see the United States use its influence to press for more tolerance — certain forms of aid, for example, could require participating organizations not to discriminate against L.G.B.T.Q. people. But after talking to people like Fatmata and Marie, I suspect that our greatest tool for change is soft power.

We should be outraged at how far the Christian right has gone to support the legal persecution of gay people in Africa. These laws need to change, but I doubt that equal and opposite meddling is the solution.

Instead, we can call upon our own leaders to help fund safe spaces abroad and strengthen lines of communication with local organizations like the Dignity Association, and speak out when their members are threatened.

As for those of us in the L.G.B.T.Q. community, let's embrace our power online. In the face of bigotry and restrictive legislation, flaunting our pride can be an act of radical resistance. And all of us can speak with our wallets, making clear that tourism will be jeopardized where same-sex love is punished.

Attitudes aren't shifting fast enough for young people like Abdul, who was outed in 2019 and driven from his home. Now 20, he imagines a different life for himself because of the queer celebrities he follows online.

They've taught him that he has to strive, he said, adding, "I know it's not going to be easy."

COLUMNIST | EZRA KLEIN

4 Questions About the Debt Ceiling Deal

IF THE DEBT CEILING deal between President Biden and Speaker Kevin McCarthy wins congressional approval, it will tell us a lot about what this Republican Party cares about and how it really works. And it will have proved something important about which lines Democrats can hold and which ones they can't.

The deal Biden and McCarthy struck is a modest package of spending nips and safety-net tucks. Some of the policy is stupid (like cutting funding for I.R.S. enforcement) and some of it is cruel (like adding work requirements for some older adults who need food stamps), but what is most surprising about the package is its size. It's about a $69 billion cut to spending next year and a $112 billion cut in 2025, with no significant budget caps or automatic cuts kicking in after two years. It leaves Biden's major achievements, from the Inflation Reduction Act to student loan cancellation, intact.

Threatening default — and we came within days of it this time — in order to get a deal like this is like threatening to detonate a bomb beneath the bank unless the teller gives you $150 and a commemorative mug. It's a bizarre mismatch of means and ends.

For me, this deal offers more questions than answers. Here are four of them.

First, what does it mean to have a deal? Ultraconservative House Republicans forced Kevin McCarthy to endure 14 humiliating failed votes — and make a slew of concessions — to win the speakership. The message seemed clear: He served at their pleasure. And after agreeing, as part of the deal that won him the gavel, to allow any dissatisfied member to call a vote on his speakership at any time, he could not risk their displeasure. That was where the danger of default lurked. A deal between Biden and McCarthy was always possible. A deal that would satisfy Biden, McCarthy and the Freedom Caucus was not.

But McCarthy isn't acting as if he needs to keep his right flank happy. And it definitely isn't happy: "Some $4 Trillion in debt for — at best — a two year spending freeze and no serious substantive policy reforms," tweeted Representative Chip Roy, a prominent member of the Freedom Caucus. "#NoDeal." Roy is also accusing McCarthy of betraying promises he made to win the speakership.

Already, Republican presidential aspirants like Ron DeSantis are trying to destroy the agreement from the outside. Still, if McCarthy can survive this play, then his speakership looks stronger and more stable than its troubled birth suggested. But then what was the point of those 14 votes his colleagues put him through? Which brings me to my next question.

What do Republicans actually want? The deal that resolved the 2011 debt ceiling crisis included almost a trillion dollars of cuts over 10 years and created a "supercommittee" that had to agree on $1.5 trillion more in deficit reduction. It also created a backup mechanism that would hammer down more than a trillion dollars in automatic cuts if the supercommittee failed.

It was terrible policy, sucking demand out of an economy that desperately needed more spending. But the deal reflected a clear view within the Republican Party, which was that deficits were out of control, spending was the problem and policy success was to be measured in dollars of spending cut.

This was the period in which Paul Ryan was rising to the heights of Republican Party politics by promising to privatize and cut Medicare, gut Medicaid, repeal Obamacare and sharply constrain federal spending. Ryan's positions were so popular within the party that he became Mitt Romney's pick for vice president and, after Romney lost, speaker of the House.

Today's Republican Party is different. McCarthy, following in Donald Trump's footsteps, declared Social Security and Medicare and military spending sacrosanct. Republicans made no serious move to repeal Obamacare or slash Medicaid. They have confined themselves mostly to proposing cuts to nondefense discretionary spending — which accounts for only about a sixth of annual federal spending and is the part of the budget that is already projected to shrink in the coming years.

We may soon find out how this Republican Party really works.

There is no obvious question about the country's fiscal future that the Republican Party's current policies propose an answer to. If you are worried about future deficits or the size of government and you don't want to raise taxes, then you have to cut Social Security, Medicare and other health programs and military spending. But Republicans don't want to do any of that.

When will Democrats wise up on the debt ceiling? In 2010 and 2011, the Obama administration negotiated over the debt ceiling in part because it wanted a debt deal. The administration had pivoted to austerity — wrongly, in my view — and it used the debt ceiling to trade with Republicans for policies, like defense cuts, it supported but couldn't get any other way.

Biden's position, at least rhetorically, was different. He swore he would never negotiate over the debt ceiling. But then he did exactly that. This deal is built out of Republican policy demands. It's not a terrible deal, in the sense that the concessions are small. But what Biden and the Democrats got out of this was a debt ceiling increase. There was no attempt, as there was in the Obama administration's negotiations, to find a bipartisan deal that achieved major administration aims.

Which is all to say that Biden proved something that Democrats should already have known. As long as the debt ceiling exists, there is no way to avoid negotiating over the debt ceiling. The various workarounds that have been proposed — the 14th Amendment, minting a multitrillion-dollar platinum coin, "premium bonds" — carry too much legal and market risk. The way to get rid of the debt ceiling is to get rid of the debt ceiling. Democrats should have done that when they held power in 2021 and 2022. They should prioritize it when they next get a chance.

Are bipartisan debt deals dead? Defenders of the debt ceiling will tell you that it's often the forcing mechanism for bipartisan debt deals, and as such, does more good than harm. I suspect those days are over. Debt ceiling negotiations have become structurally unbalanced in a way that will make larger debt deals impossible.

Republicans see raising the debt ceiling as the main concession they're offering Democrats. Because of that, they have no reason to bargain over a balanced policy package in which Democratic priorities, like tax increases, are part of the deal.

Democrats want to break the Republican Party of the habit of using the debt ceiling as leverage. Biden can sell this deal to his party only because it is small. If it were larger, there would be few Democratic votes to pass it, as Democrats would see it as both bad policy and catastrophic precedent.

The debt debates of 2010 are, again, a good comparison here. The debt ceiling fight and the supercommittee came after the report of the Simpson-Bowles Commission. The big bipartisan debt deal that so many sought never materialized, but it wasn't for lack of trying. There is no similar suite of attempts to build a framework for compromise today.

The irony is that 2010 was a terrible time to be thinking about deficit reduction. But 2023 isn't. I would rank deficits far lower on the list of worries than, say, climate change and A.I. and great powers' conflict, but still: The Congressional Budget Office projects interest payments on the debt to rise to 7.2 percent of G.D.P. in 2052 from 1.6 percent in 2022. No one wants that. And right now, inflation is high, the labor market is tight and the Fed is raising interest rates because the economy could do with a bit of cooling. This a pretty reasonable moment to nudge the budget onto a sounder path.

I'm pretty certain Biden would welcome the opportunity to broker a grand budget bargain. That's the kind of deal he's made over and over again in his career. But he would need a Republican Party willing to accept tax increases and willing to negotiate a bill that would bolster him in 2024, and that's not this Republican Party.

LETTERS

Christian Cooper and the Birds of New York

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "Birds Show Us What It Means to Be Free," by Christian Cooper (Opinion guest essay, May 28):

I am a Central Park birder who has known Christian Cooper for many years. It is heartwarming to know that out of something bad — what he described as the "racially explosive" encounter with a white woman with her dog in 2020 — came something immensely good.

Among birders Chris is a cherished member of our community. He is known for his knowledge of birds, his ability not only to spot birds but also to identify birdsong, as well as his generosity in sharing this knowledge with those of us less gifted than he is. How wonderful that Chris is now able to share all this with a wider public.

Thanks in good part to Chris, the world of birding is no longer an all-white activity. Walk in the Ramble in the spring and you'll meet Black, Hispanic and Asian birders as well as many young birders.

JUDITH SCHILLER RABI
NEW YORK

TO THE EDITOR:

Christian Cooper's experience of finding community in Central Park highlights one of the enduring values of this iconic green space: New Yorkers from all backgrounds can find respite and be together regardless of race, gender or socioeconomic status — the core ethos of the park.

Today, when more people than ever flock to Central Park, this value will be tested as society changes around us. The public has the power to help protect this democratic space by following the rules that were designed to make crowded spaces work for all.

As Mr. Cooper points out, leashing dogs and keeping them out of sensitive landscapes, like in the Ramble, reduce conflicts and allow everyone to enjoy the unique urban space together.

BETSY SMITH, NEW YORK

The writer is the president and C.E.O. of the Central Park Conservancy, the nonprofit that maintains and manages Central Park.

TO THE EDITOR:

What a beautifully written essay by Christian Cooper. It captures the wonder, amazement and beauty of diversity in nature of which we humans are just a part.

I'm so glad that such a narrow-minded and potentially dangerous encounter in Central Park resulted in such a rewarding and positive means of expression for him and one that we birders will enjoy following — in all our colors, interests and loves.

BETH MILLER
TALLAHASSEE, FLA.

Wrongful Convictions

TO THE EDITOR:

"Justice Long Denied, Ensured by Prosecutors," by Lisa Belkin (Opinion guest essay, May 20), describes Texas and Florida prosecutors' tragic unwillingness to reconsider two innocent men's convictions.

The Texas and Florida courts, along with the Department of Justice, deserve some blame for state prosecutors' closed-mindedness.

At the American Bar Association's urging, 24 state courts have adopted rules recognizing prosecutors' ethical responsibility to rectify the conviction of innocent people. This means that after winning a conviction, prosecutors must tell the court and the defense if they learn of significant new exculpatory evidence. This may also mean reinvestigating and then supporting defense efforts to free demonstrably innocent inmates.

Sadly, many prosecutors oppose these common-sense ethical rules. In a 2011 letter to Washington State's Supreme Court, for instance, the D.O.J. predicted that the rules would unleash a host of dire consequences, none of which occurred after the rules were nevertheless adopted.

In Texas, Florida and around half the other states, owing largely to the D.O.J.'s opposition, prosecutors have no ethical obligation to correct wrongful convictions.

It is time for the D.O.J. to reverse its official position and for state courts to confirm prosecutors' ethical duty to admit and correct their mistakes.

NORA FREEMAN ENGSTROM
BRUCE GREEN

Ms. Engstrom is a professor at Stanford Law School, and Mr. Green is a professor at Fordham Law School.

Reparations and Taxes

TO THE EDITOR:

"Reparations Put Democrats in a Quandary" (front page, May 28) cites a number of ways reparations can be implemented. But they have a major drawback: the distribution of large amounts of government funds at one time. This, of course, is impossible in practice.

Instead, why doesn't the federal government provide those who can be documented as descendants of enslaved people relief from paying federal taxes for their lifetimes? It would be even better if states were to do the same, as well as provide relief from property taxes.

Ideally, this would apply to the current generation of descendants and their children.

BERNARD S. SHARFMAN
BETHESDA, MD.

A Worker Shortage

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "U.S. Semiconductor Boom Faces Shortage of Workers" (Business, May 22): The U.S. semiconductor industry won't fill its gaping work force deficit without women and people of color, but we have a long way to go. Recent studies show that only 15 percent of engineers are women, and just 5 percent are Black.

To make matters worse, 40 percent of women who graduate with engineering degrees are leaving the field, if they enter it at all. This is bad math. If we don't find a way to bridge gender and racial gaps in engineering, it will be impossible to generate the 70,000-plus semiconductor workers we'll need to become a global industry player.

We can't talk about overcoming skills gaps without also talking about how to encourage more historically marginalized groups to join the semiconductor field.

Higher ed and industry have to come together to make clear that these jobs have important societal impact, provide hands-on experiences that signify belonging and create desirable workplaces.

All these factors are of general importance to talent recruitment and retention, and research shows they are particularly important to women and those who are underrepresented in the field. The math is quite simple.

SIAN BEILOCK, NEW YORK

The writer is the departing president of Barnard and the president-elect of Dartmouth.

Politicized Courts

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "The Courts Should Be More Political, Not Less," by Jedediah Britton-Purdy (Opinion guest essay, May 21):

In an ideal world judges would be chosen and rule without regard to politics. In reality, as Professor Britton-Purdy argues, the judiciary is just another political branch of government. Too often, the selection of judges and the thrust of their decisions reflect their political beliefs.

Taking this as a given, Professor Britton-Purdy urges that democracy is best protected if judicial candidates more openly espouse their constitutional viewpoints and voters can make better informed decisions in selecting those who more closely reflect popular constitutional beliefs.

While Professor Britton-Purdy's proposal has the appeal of a practical solution, it points in a dangerous direction. If judging is accepted as merely an alternative exercise of politics, the basic belief in a fair and impartial system of justice will be fatally forgotten.

Better to keep alive the vision of courts as "forums of principle, wisdom and deliberation" that deliver just judgments free of political fervor. While that may be an elusive goal, our historic democratic precepts require its pursuit.

GERALD HARRIS, NEW YORK

The writer is a retired New York City Criminal Court judge.

The Times welcomes letters from readers. Letters must include the writer's name, address and telephone number. Those selected may be edited, and shortened to fit allotted space. Email: letters@nytimes.com


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3 ECONOMY
After three consecutive months of declines, job openings jumped in April, reaching 10.1 million.



6 TECH TIP
Alternative apps and shared photo albums can help you ditch the crowd and create a private social space.



9 SPORTS
Novak Djokovic's comments on the Kosovo violence drew rebukes and outrage, but he was not backing down.

Business

The New York Times



Northvolt, a small player in the global battery industry, has been offered hundreds of millions of euros to build factories in Europe.



Battery material fractions from Northvolt's mechanical recycling process at the company's facility in Vasteras, Sweden.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY FELIX ODELL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Workers at the Vasteras factory. Last month, the company recommitted to building a factory near Hamburg, Germany, after having considered postponing it to invest in the United States instead.

U.S. Battery Subsidies Put Allies on Edge

As the E.U. tries to acquire the building blocks to make electric cars, it frets that it will lose out on vital investment.

By JACK EWING and MELISSA EDDY

VASTERAS, SWEDEN — European leaders complained for years that the United States was not doing enough to fight climate change. Now that the Biden administration has devoted hundreds of billions of dollars to that cause, many Europeans are complaining that the United States is going about it the wrong way.

That new critique is born of a deep fear in Germany, France, Britain and other European countries that Washington's approach will hurt the allies it ought to be working with, luring away much of the new investments in electric car and battery factories not already destined for China, South Korea and other Asian countries.

That concern is the main reason some European leaders, including Germany's second highest ranking official, Robert Habeck, have beaten a path to Vasteras, a city about 60 miles from Stockholm that is best known for a Viking burial mound and a Gothic cathedral.

Officials have been traveling there to court one of Europe's few homegrown battery companies, Northvolt. Led by a former Tesla executive, Northvolt is a small player in the global battery industry, but European leaders are offering it hundreds of millions of euros to build factories in Europe. Mr. Habeck visited in February to lobby the company to push ahead on its plan to build a factory near

CONTINUED ON PAGE B4

The Percent Increase in Staple Food Prices In the E.U. Over the Last Year



Source: Britain's Office for National Statistics, Italy's Industry Ministry and Germany's Federal Statistical Office. REBECCA LIEBERMAN/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Why Are Food Prices So High in Europe?

By ESHE NELSON

LONDON — It is the most basic of staple food items: sliced white bread. In Britain, the average price of a loaf was 28 percent higher in April, at 1.39 pounds, or $1.72, than it was a year earlier.

In Italy, the price of spaghetti and other pasta, a fixture of the Italian diet, has risen nearly 17 percent from the year before. In Germany, the European Union's largest economy, cheese prices are nearly 40 percent higher than a year ago, and potatoes cost 14 percent more.

Throughout the European Union, consumer food prices were on average nearly 17 percent higher in April than a year earlier, a slight slowdown from the previous month, which set the fastest pace of growth in over two and a half decades. The situation is worse in Britain than in its Western European neighbors: Food and nonalcoholic drink prices were 19 percent higher, the quickest pace of annual food inflation in more than 45 years. By comparison, the annual rate of U.S. food inflation was 7.7 percent.

CONTINUED ON PAGE B5

Amazon Employees Connect Over Working From Home

By EMMA GOLDBERG

Eric Deshawn Lerma felt waves of anxiety when he sat down to tally the new costs in his routine since Amazon's return to the office this spring. There's parking. There's fuel. There's lunch. They add up to at least $200 extra a month, all to support a policy whose justification he can't fully understand — after three years in which he and his teammates have been doing their jobs from home.

Still, when Mr. Lerma heard that some of his colleagues were organizing a walkout to protest the return-to-office policy, which asks employees to come in at least three days a week, he initially wavered on whether to participate. After all, he realizes that thousands of Amazon workers have no flexibility to work from home. Their jobs require them to go into warehouses to do physically taxing labor each day.

"It really provided me with a sense of internal conflict about working from home being a luxury or a right," said Mr. Lerma, 27, who is an executive assistant in Seattle and joined the company, where he feels he has grown personally and professionally, in 2022. "There are different rights and amenities afforded to my role."

He ultimately decided, though, to join virtually. "While warehouse workers have much harsher working conditions than I do," he said, "I should still be able to reserve the right to protect my autonomy as an employee."

Thousands of corporate employees, across industries, who remain adamant that they do not want to return to the office are now confronting a tension: How do their demands compare with those of the millions of workers whose jobs have never permitted them the ease of remote work? And can a corporate employee's advocacy be of use to workers, including those trying to unionize, outside the corporate sphere?

CONTINUED ON PAGE B6

JPMorgan Denies Fault For Epstein

By MATTHEW GOLDSTEIN

Two of the highest-ranking executives at JPMorgan Chase pointed fingers elsewhere and denied having had knowledge of Jeffrey Epstein's long history of sexually abusing teenage girls and young women, as they sought to deflect accusations that the bank ignored multiple warnings about the disgraced financier.

Testimony released in recent days from Jamie Dimon, JPMorgan's longtime chief executive, and Mary Erdoes, head of the asset and wealth management group, has painted a picture of corporate leaders who rarely communicated with one another about a man who would become one of the bank's most notorious customers. The comments were made in depositions related to two lawsuits against the bank.

CONTINUED ON PAGE B3

The Digest

AUTOMOBILES

Electric Vehicle Maker Seeks a Cash Infusion

The electric carmaker Lucid Group said it plans to raise about $3 billion through a stock offering, nearly two-thirds of which will come from Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund. The funds come as the automaker, like its peers, struggles with mounting losses and tightening cash reserves amid recession fears and a price war sparked by Tesla.

Lucid's cash and cash equivalents had dropped to $900 million at the end of the first quarter, from $1.74 billion in the previous quarter. Sherry House, the company's chief financial officer, said the firm had about $4.1 billion in liquidity, enough to fund it at least into the second quarter of next year.

The maker of luxury sedans trimmed its 2023 production forecast last month and reported lower-than-expected first-quarter revenue. Despite Lucid's struggles, the Saudi fund has been a loyal investor in the automaker, with its stake currently worth nearly $9 billion. *REUTERS*

AUTOMOBILES

Toyota Will Beef Up E.V. Production in U.S.



JOHANNA GERON/REUTERS

Toyota will invest another $2.1 billion in an electric and hybrid vehicle battery factory that's under construction near Greensboro, N.C.

The plant will supply batteries to Toyota's huge complex in Georgetown, Ky., which will build Toyota's first U.S.-made electric vehicle, a new S.U.V. with three rows of seats.

Toyota plans to employ 2,100 workers at the North Carolina battery factory, which will start production in 2025. The investment will prepare infrastructure for expansion. It brings the total investment in the Randolph County plant to $5.9 billion to meet the company's goal of selling 1.8 million electric or hybrid vehicles in the United States by 2030.

The 9 million-square-foot Kentucky complex now employs 9,500 people who make the Camry sedan, RAV4 Hybrid SUV, several engines and other components. The company says jobs will shift to the new electric vehicle when production starts in 2025. *ASSOCIATED PRESS*

AIRLINES

American Plans to Appeal Ruling Against Alliance

American Airlines will appeal a federal court decision requiring it to end an alliance with JetBlue Airways, American's chief executive, Robert Isom, said on Wednesday.

Judge Leo Sorokin of U.S. District Court in Boston ruled on May 19 that the airlines' Northeast Alliance broke antitrust law and ordered the companies to dissolve the arrangement within 30 days.

"We've got a legal system that allows for appeal, and we're going to do that," Mr. Isom said at Bernstein's annual Strategic Decisions Conference.

The Justice Department sued in 2021 to undo the alliance announced the previous year. It called it a "de facto merger" of American and JetBlue operations in Boston and New York that removed incentives to compete and would end up costing consumers an additional $700 million a year to fly out of the region's busy airports. *REUTERS*

S&P 500 INDEX
−0.6%
4,179.83

DOW JONES INDUSTRIALS
−0.4%
32,908.27

NASDAQ COMPOSITE INDEX
−0.6%
12,935.29

10-YEAR TREASURY YIELD
3.64%
−0.066 points

CRUDE OIL (U.S.)
$68.09
−$1.37

GOLD (N.Y.)
$1,982.10
+$5.00

As China Struggles, Markets Lag Globally

By The Associated Press

Wall Street slipped as stocks slumped worldwide Wednesday on worries about the strength of the global economy and inflation.

The S&P 500 fell 0.6 percent, the Dow Jones industrial average dropped 0.4 percent, and the Nasdaq composite lost 0.6 percent.

STOCKS & BONDS

Stock markets in Asia fell even more following discouraging data on manufacturing from China. The world's second-largest economy has not been rebounding as strongly as many investors had hoped. That raises worries when economies around the world are contending with inflation and higher interest rates.

Wall Street has weathered such concerns pretty well recently, largely because of gains for a handful of tech companies and others getting swept up in the buzz around artificial intelligence. The S&P 500 closed out May with a modest gain.

But some of the air seeped out of those big winners on Wednesday. Nvidia, whose chips are helping to power the surge into A.I., dropped 5.7 percent for its first fall since it gave a monster forecast last week for upcoming sales.

Worries are also rising for the U.S. economy, which has slowed under the weight of much higher interest rates. The Federal Reserve has raised rates at a furious pace since early last year in hopes of getting inflation under control. But high rates work by hurting the economy and hitting prices for investments.

"We see this as a race for weakness between inflation and economic activity," said Tony Roth, chief investment officer at Wilmington Trust.

Either inflation needs to break lower to return to the Fed's target, which would allow it to go easier on interest rates, or the economy will fall into recession. Mr. Roth said both the economy and inflation have remained strong for longer than he expected: "It's a very slow race to the bottom."

A report released Wednesday morning bolstered expectations for the Federal Reserve to raise rates at least one more time. It showed employers advertised more job openings than expected, the latest signal of a job market that has remained remarkably resilient.

While that's good news for workers and for the economy, it also gives the Fed more leeway to keep rates high. A strong job market could keep upward pressure on workers' wages, which Wall Street fears could keep inflation high.

"The increase in job openings is the worst news the Fed could have because that just puts more pressure on wages," Mr. Roth said.

But stocks pared their losses in the afternoon after a Fed official hinted the central bank may hold rates steady at its next meeting in two weeks.

"Indeed, skipping a rate hike at a coming meeting would allow the Committee to see more data before making decisions about the extent of additional policy firming," the Fed governor Philip Jefferson said in a speech. But he said the Fed could still raise rates again at a later meeting.

Other, smaller portions of the economy have shown much more pain in the face of higher rates. A report on Wednesday morning suggested manufacturing in the Chicago region is contracting by much more than economists feared.

The U.S. banking system has also come under pressure. The Fed-driven surge in rates means customers are pulling their deposits in hopes of making more in interest at money-market funds.

On Wall Street, Ford Motor fell 4.7 percent after its chief executive, Jim Farley, told the Bernstein Decisions Conference that electric cars will cost more to make than gas-powered vehicles until at least 2030.

In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year Treasury, which helps sets rates for mortgages and other important loans that influence the housing and other markets, fell to 3.64 percent. The two-year yield, which moves more on expectations of Fed action, fell to 4.39 percent.

The S&P 500 Index

Position of the S&P 500 index at 1-minute intervals on Wednesday

-- Previous Close: 4,205.52



Source: FactSet

THE NEW YORK TIMES



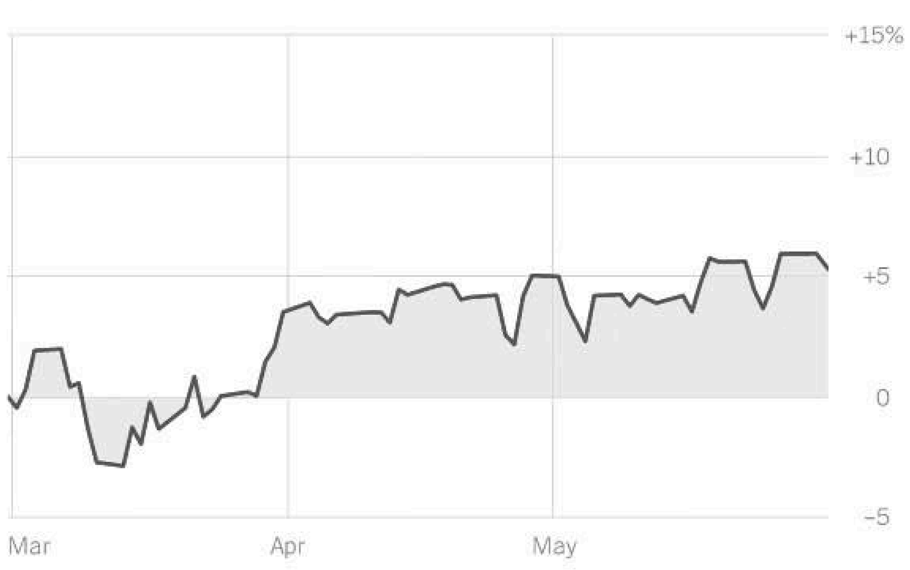
DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ford Motor fell 4.7 percent after details from the company about the cost of producing electric cars.

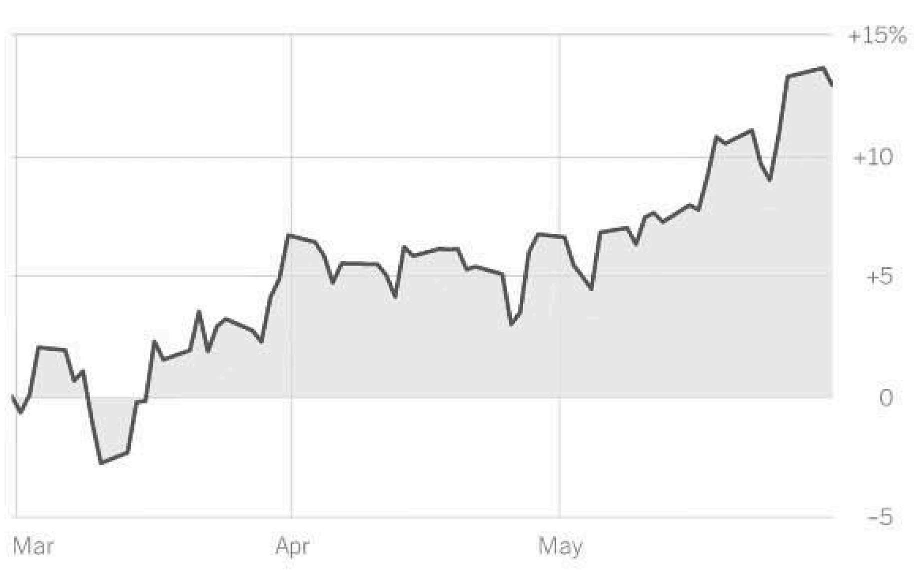
What Happened in Stock Markets Yesterday

POWERED BY FACTSET

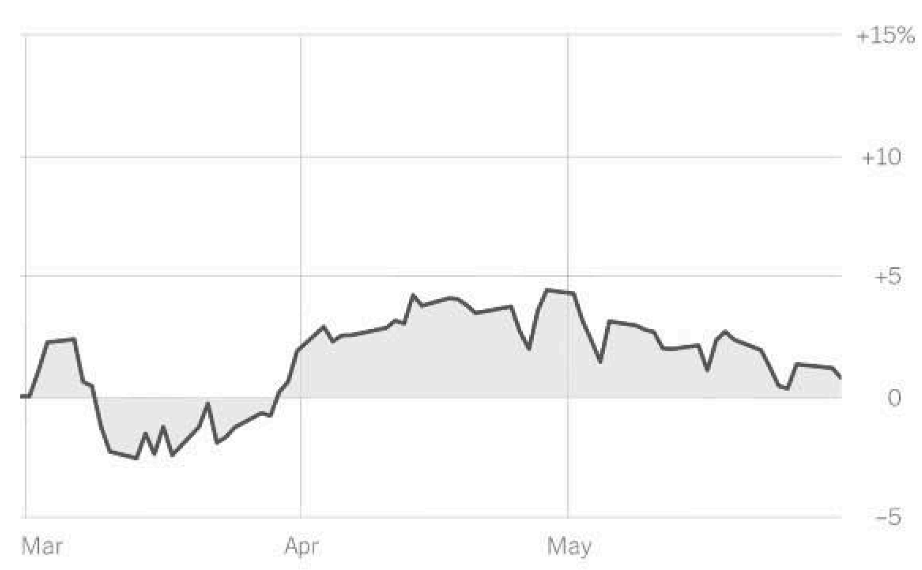
S&P 500 4,179.83 ↓ −0.6%
3 month performance: **+5.3%**



Nasdaq Composite Index 12,935.29 ↓ −0.6%
3 month performance: **+12.9%**



Dow Jones Industrials 32,908.27 ↓ −0.4%
3 month performance: **+0.8%**



Best performers

S&P 500 COMPANIES	CLOSE	CHANGE
1. Intel Corp (INTC)	$31.44	+4.8%
2. Edwards Lifesciences (EW)	$84.23	+3.5
3. DexCom (DXCM)	$117.26	+3.3
4. Intuit (INTU)	$419.12	+3.2
5. Jack Henry & Associates (JKHY)	$152.89	+2.9
6. Edison International (EIX)	$67.52	+2.7
7. Pfizer Inc (PFE)	$38.02	+2.7
8. AmerisourceBergen Co. (ABC)	$170.15	+2.5
9. Constellation Brands (STZ)	$242.97	+2.5
10. Molson Coors Brewing 'B' (TAP)	$61.85	+2.4

Worst performers

S&P 500 COMPANIES	CLOSE	CHANGE
1. Advance Auto Parts (AAP)	$72.89	−35.0%
2. Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE)	$14.42	−7.1
3. HP Inc. (HPQ)	$29.06	−6.0
4. Keycorp (KEY)	$9.34	−5.9
5. NVIDIA (NVDA)	$378.34	−5.7
6. Newell Brands (NWL)	$8.31	−5.7
7. Advanced Micro Devices (AMD)	$118.21	−5.6
8. Zions Bancorp. (ZION)	$27.29	−5.6
9. Genuine Parts (GPC)	$148.93	−5.6
10. Citizens Financial (CFG)	$25.78	−5.1

Most active

S&P 500 COMPANIES	CLOSE	CHANGE	VOLUME IN MIL.
1. Tesla (TSLA)	$203.93	+1.4%	149
2. Intel Corp (INTC)	$31.44	+4.8	136
3. NVIDIA (NVDA)	$378.34	−5.7	100
4. Apple (AAPL)	$177.25	−0.0	99
5. Advanced Micro Devices (AMD)	$118.21	−5.6	87
6. Ford Motor (F)	$12.00	−4.7	86
7. Amazon.com (AMZN)	$120.58	−0.9	72
8. AT&T Inc. (T)	$15.73	+0.6	70
9. Bank of America (BAC)	$27.79	−1.7	60
10. Coca-Cola (KO)	$59.66	−0.2	59

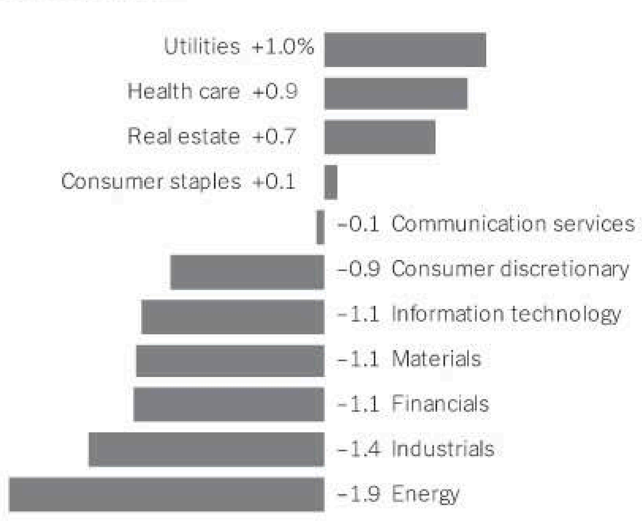
Large-cap stocks

	TOTAL RETURN 1 YR	5 YRS	TOTAL ASSETS IN BIL.
1. Vanguard Total Stock Market Index Fund Institutional Select Shares (VSTSX)	+1.3%	+10.5%	1,264.4
2. Vanguard Instl 500 Index Trust (VFFSX)	+2.6	+11.4	820.7
3. Fidelity 500 Index Fund (FXAIX)	+2.6	+11.4	388.6
4. Vanguard Institutional Index Fund Institutional Shares (VINIX)	+2.6	+11.4	239.6
5. American Funds The Growth Fund of America Class 529-C (CGFCX)	−2.1	+7.9	213.1
6. Vanguard Growth Index Fund Institutional Shares (VIGIX)	+1.3	+13.1	158.7
7. American Funds Washington Mutual Investors Fund Class 529-F-1 (CWMFX)	+2.6	+10.0	153.6
8. Vanguard Value Index Fund Admiral Shares (VVIAX)	+2.5	+9.1	151.2
9. American Funds Fundamental Investors Class 529-F-1 (CFNFX)	+4.0	+8.8	111.6
10. American Funds Investment Company of America Class R-2E (RIBEX)	+4.9	+8.4	110.3

Source: Morningstar

Sector performance

S&P 500 SECTORS



How stock markets fared yesterday in Asia ...

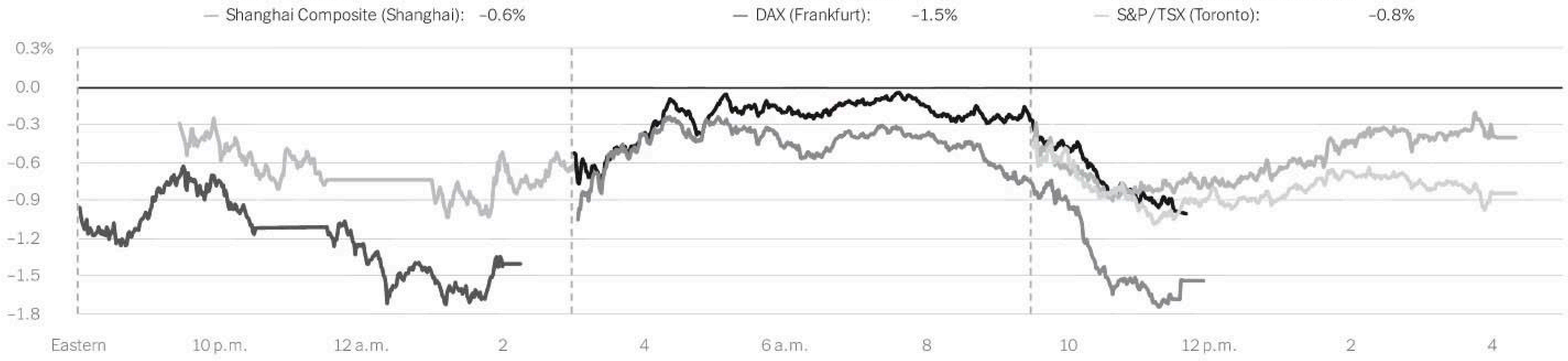
— Nikkei 225 (Japan): −1.4%
— Shanghai Composite (Shanghai): −0.6%

... in Europe

— FTSE 100 (London): −1.0%
— DAX (Frankfurt): −1.5%

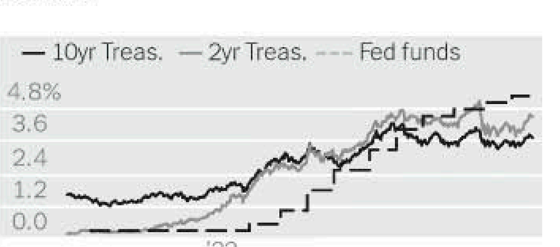
... and North America

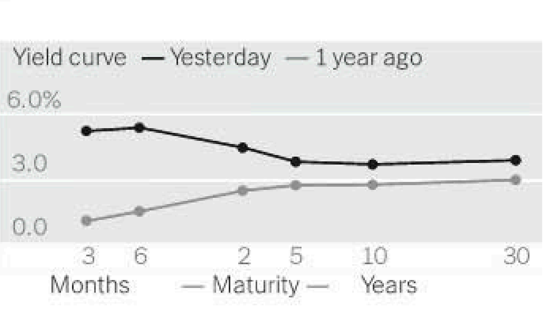
— Dow Jones Industrials (New York): −0.4%
— S&P/TSX (Toronto): −0.8%



What Is Happening in Other Markets and the Economy

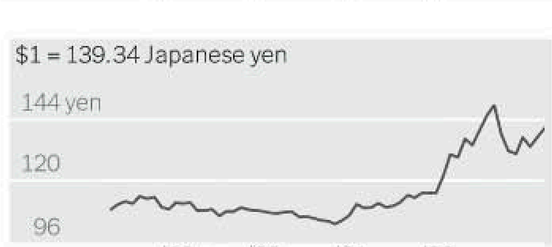
Bonds



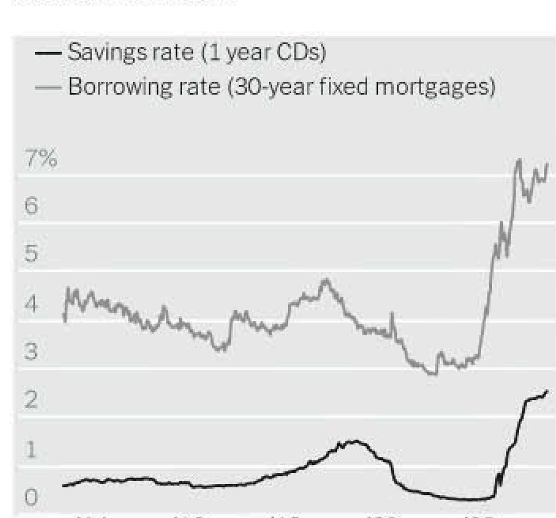


Currencies

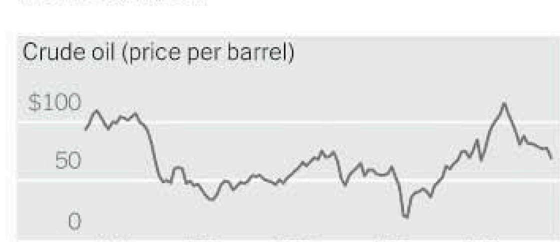


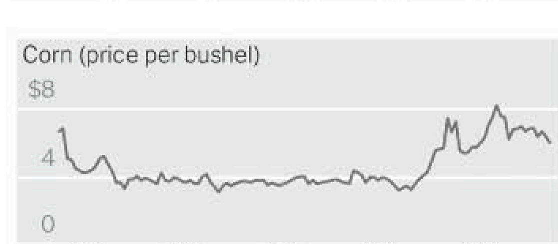


Consumer rates

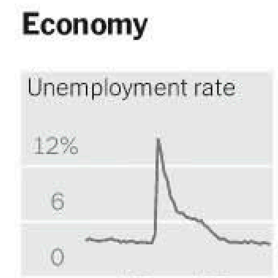


Commodities

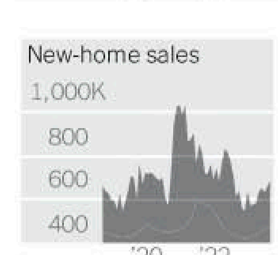


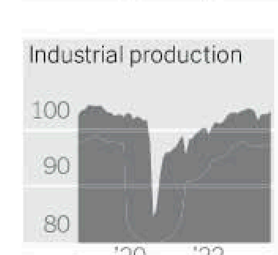


Economy









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JPMorgan Tries to Deflect Blame for Long Relationship With Epstein

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE

JPMorgan has repeatedly denied having any knowledge of Mr. Epstein's illicit activity. The lawsuits brought by Mr. Epstein's victims and the government of the U.S. Virgin Islands claim that for nearly 15 years, the nation's biggest lender mostly looked past warning signs that Mr. Epstein was financing illicit sexual activities at his palatial residences in New York, Florida and the Virgin Islands.

Those signs, most notably large cash withdrawals, raised warnings within the bank. The suits, filed in Manhattan federal court, contend that JPMorgan chose to keep Mr. Epstein as a client for so long because he was bringing business to the bank.



ANTHONY BEHAR/SIPA USA, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

James E. Staley, who was a top private banker at JPMorgan and the main advocate of Jeffrey Epstein as a client, left the company in January 2013.



MARCO BELLO/REUTERS



MARK LENNIHAN/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jamie Dimon, above left, the chief executive of JPMorgan, said he had barely heard of Mr. Epstein before his July 2019 arrest on federal sex trafficking charges. Mary Erdoes, above right, the head of JPMorgan's asset and wealth management group, dismissed Mr. Epstein as a client in 2013.

Mr. Dimon's deposition was taken Friday, but a redacted transcript was released on Wednesday and reviewed by The New York Times. It shows he repeatedly denied meeting or communicating with Mr. Epstein. He also said he had no recollection of being briefed by any of his top lieutenants on any issues with Mr. Epstein, including his 2008 conviction in Florida on a charge of soliciting prostitution from a teenage girl — an offense that forced him to register as a sex offender.

Widely regarded as one of the most powerful executives on Wall Street, Mr. Dimon said he had barely heard of Mr. Epstein before his July 2019 arrest on federal sex trafficking charges, even though Mr. Epstein — who was worth some $600 million when he died — was often tabloid fodder because of his friendship with Prince Andrew, Bill Gates, the investor Leon Black and the tech billionaire Peter Thiel.

"I don't recall knowing anything about Jeffrey Epstein until the stories broke sometime in 2019, and I was surprised that I didn't even — had never even heard of the guy, pretty much. And how involved he was with so many people," Mr. Dimon said during the all-day deposition at JPMorgan's headquarters in Manhattan.

The bank stopped doing business with Mr. Epstein in 2013.

Ms. Erdoes, in a deposition taken in March that was also reviewed by The Times, said the decision to dismiss Mr. Epstein as a customer was made after an annual review of his accounts because he had been deemed a "high risk client." The review took place several months after James E. Staley, who had been a top private banker at JPMorgan, left the bank in January 2013.

Ms. Erdoes said the decision to stop doing business with Mr. Epstein was made easier with Mr. Staley gone from the bank.

"Mr. Staley was Mr. Epstein's advocate in the bank and was the senior relationship manager for Mr. Epstein," Ms. Erdoes said. "And without someone there advocating for Mr. Epstein and the situation that I viewed, I was exiting Mr. Epstein."

The depositions reflect something of a blame game at JPMorgan, with some suggesting that Mr. Staley should have known about Mr. Epstein's sex trafficking, and that he had the duty to let others know. JPMorgan has separately sued Mr. Staley in a bid to hold him liable for any damages it may have to pay.

Mr. Staley, who is scheduled to be deposed as soon as next week, has argued in court papers that he did nothing wrong or inappropriate. His lawyers did not return requests for comment

In a statement on Wednesday, JPMorgan said it regretted having Mr. Epstein as a client. "Had the firm believed he was engaged in an ongoing sex trafficking operation, Epstein would not have been retained as a client," the statement said.

David Boies, a lawyer for Mr. Epstein's victims suing the bank, said Ms. Erdoes and others at JPMorgan "were fully aware of Epstein's large cash withdrawals and Epstein's sex trafficking. If, as he claims, Mr. Dimon was the only person in New York who never heard of Epstein before July 2019, that is an indictment, not a defense."

So far, dozens of depositions have been taken in the litigation. Judge Jed S. Rakoff of Federal District Court in Manhattan has put them on a fast track, with Mr. Dimon's among the last to be taken of bank employees.

In Ms. Erdoes's deposition, portions of which were earlier reported by The Washington Post, she said she personally informed Mr. Epstein that she was dismissing him as a client in summer 2013, during a visit to his Manhattan home. She said it was only the second time she had met him in person.

Ms. Erdoes said she was not satisfied with Mr. Epstein's explanation that large cash withdrawals were associated solely with his air travel. When lawyers for the victims asked whether the withdrawals may have been for payments to "women and girls," Ms. Erdoes said she wasn't sure what Mr. Epstein did with the funds.

When asked why similar cash withdrawals by Mr. Epstein had not led to his dismissal earlier, Ms. Erdoes said she wasn't "privy to those discussions." Mr. Dimon said he was never informed that some within the bank were concerned about Mr. Epstein's cash withdrawals going back as far as 2006.

Mr. Dimon also said Stephen Cutler, the bank's general counsel from 2007 to 2015, never raised any concerns with him about Mr. Epstein. He said that he believed Ms. Erdoes and Mr. Cutler "were both trying to do the right thing" with the information they had at the time.

But a court document filed in the litigation suggests Mr. Epstein's transactions had raised warning signs within the bank for many years. In the document — initially filed publicly but now under seal — JPMorgan said dozens of bank employees had been involved in determining whether suspicious activity reports, or SARs, should be filed about some of Mr. Epstein's transactions from 2000 to 2019.

The document offered no details on those transactions. Banks file SARs with U.S. regulators to alert them to possible money laundering, fraud or other illegal activity.

The same document also reported that in fall 2019 the bank's board of directors held two meetings to discuss "Epstein-related issues." The document did not provide any information on those meetings, which occurred shortly after Mr. Epstein's death. The document noted that during the 15 years the bank did business with Mr. Epstein, the board never met to discuss the bank's dealings with him.

The board meetings came around the time that a number of news organizations, including The Times, were reporting on the bank's relationship with Mr. Epstein and his close ties with Mr. Staley.

Mr. Dimon said in retrospect he wished he and others had known more about Mr. Epstein's crimes. He said that the bank's involvement with the sex offender ranks as one of its bigger reputational hits but that the bank should not be held liable for Mr. Epstein's sins.

"I think what happened to these women is atrocious," he said. "I wouldn't mind personally apologizing to them, not because we committed the crime. We did not. And not because we believe we're responsible, but that any potential thing, what little role that we could have eased it or helped catch it quicker or something like that."

Rising Job Openings Defy Cooling Trend

By TALMON JOSEPH SMITH

After three consecutive months of declines, job openings jumped in April, reaching 10.1 million, the Labor Department reported on Wednesday.

The surge signals that job opportunities are withstanding the economic pressures that have led many to believe that the American economy may soon enter a recession.

At the same time, the report — known as JOLTS, or the Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey — showed that the labor market was far less feverish than it was a year earlier.

The quits rate — viewed as an indicator of how confident workers are in leaving a job and finding employment elsewhere — was 3 percent, seasonally adjusted, in April 2022. Since then, it has retreated to 2.4 percent, just above its prepandemic peak. And the hiring rate was unchanged from March, which was the lowest since December 2020.

Layoffs, however, decreased again, showing that employers are hesitant to let go of employees brought on board during this recovery.

The data complicates the interest-rate outlook.

The jump in openings may put pressure on the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates even higher.

The statistical relationship between high job vacancies, as calculated by the government, and low unemployment has been frequently cited by the Federal Reserve chair, Jerome H. Powell, as a key sign of the labor market's being "unsustainably hot" and "clearly out of balance, with demand for workers substantially exceeding the supply of available workers."

But even as some economists remain unsatisfied with the progress on subduing prices, others worry that reliance on job openings as a core measure of labor market balance may lead the Fed to keep the cost of borrowing for businesses and households too high for too long, prompting a harsher downturn than necessary.

"The quits rate is nearly back to prepandemic levels, the hires rate has already reverted to prepandemic pace," Skanda Amarnath, the executive director of Employ America, a nonprofit that supports tight labor markets, wrote in a note. "JOLTS data should not drastically color this broader assessment of labor market tightness but will matter at the margins for the Fed's own perception of labor market heat."

Some question how much weight to give the report.

After peaking at a record of around 12 million in March 2022, job openings as measured by the government have fallen overall. For the past year, a mix of strong hiring for positions that were already listed and a decline in business sentiment has led to a pullback in newly created listings. But the April uptick is at least a pause in recent trends.

Some economists think the JOLTS report should be taken with a grain of salt. Gregory Daco, the chief economist at EY-Parthenon, said the bump in listings could reflect summer hiring in the rebounding service sector, though he added, "I'd want to see June before assuming that summer hiring is stronger than last year."

The report is based on a survey of about 21,000 nonfarm business and government establishments. The economic research team at Goldman Sachs has made the case that since the response rate to the JOLTS report has fallen sharply since the start of the pandemic, "these findings argue for currently treating JOLTS less like the 'true' level of job openings."

The May jobs report will be the next gauge.

The May employment report, to be released by the Labor Department on Friday, will fill out the labor market picture before Fed policymakers meet on June 13 and 14.

Economists surveyed by Bloomberg expect the data to show the addition of 195,000 jobs on a seasonally adjusted basis, down from 253,000 in the initial report for April. Unemployment, which was 3.4 percent in April — matching the lowest level since 1969 — is expected to rise to 3.5 percent, and the month-over-month increase in wages is expected to ease.

PUBLIC LEGAL NOTICE

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, COUNTY OF NEW YORK

346 MADISON AVENUE, LLC and 11 EAST 44TH STREET, LLC, Petitioners, – against – JOHN DOE, Respondents. INDEX NO.: 158558/2022

Pursuant to an order of this Court made and entered on February 10, 2023, notice is hereby given that all persons claiming any interest in the real property described below, are hereby required to appear on September 12, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. in N.Y. Supreme Court, N.Y. Cty., held at 80 Centre Street, N.Y., N.Y., 10013, Part 28, Room 122, and show cause, if any, why they should not be forever barred from maintaining any action or proceeding seeking the enforcement of the restrictive covenant set forth in Paragraph 12 of the Verified Petition [Dkt. No. 1] on the property hereinafter described, which was conveyed to Petitioners by deed, dated August 8, 2007, and recorded on September 10, 2007, as CRFN 2007000462812, in the N.Y. City Register, N.Y. Cty., as well as by deed, dated January 9, 2019, and recorded on January 10, 2019, as CRFN 2019000011381 in the N.Y. City Register, N.Y. Cty. The Verified Petition, the Order, and all other documents filed in this proceeding may be obtained from the Court docket or by contacting counsel for Petitioners, which contact information is set forth below. The property affected by this notice is substantially described in the Verified Petition and is described as follows: the property located at Block 1279, Lot 17, and known as 346 Madison Avenue, Borough of Manhattan, N.Y. Cty., State of N.Y., as well as the property located at Block 1279, Lot 9, and known as 7-11 East 44th Street, Borough of Manhattan, N.Y. Cty., State of N.Y. **Any party seeking to be heard at the Public Hearing shall provide Petitioners with any supporting documents, such as a memo of law, but by no later than two weeks prior to the Public Hearing date. Supporting papers shall be delivered to counsel for Petitioners by overnight mail or email at the following address: Attn: Claude G. Szyfer, Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP, 180 Maiden Lane, N.Y., N.Y. 10038, email: cszyfer@stroock.com, (P) (212) 806-5934.**

IN THE UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF DELAWARE

In re PHOENIX SERVICES TOPCO, LLC, *et al.*, Debtors.[1]) **Chapter 11**) **Case No. 22-10906 (MFW)**) **(Jointly Administered)**

Obj. Deadline: June 9, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. (ET)
Hearing Date: June 21, 2023 at 10:30 a.m. (ET)

NOTICE OF (I) APPROVAL OF DISCLOSURE STATEMENT, (II) ESTABLISHMENT OF VOTING RECORD DATE, (III) HEARING ON CONFIRMATION OF THE PROPOSED PLAN, (IV) PROCEDURES FOR OBJECTION TO THE CONFIRMATION OF THE PROPOSED PLAN, AND (V) PROCEDURES AND DEADLINE FOR VOTING ON THE PROPOSED PLAN

TO ALL PARTIES IN INTEREST:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE THAT:

1. ***Approval of Disclosure Statement***. On May 9, 2023, the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware (the "**Bankruptcy Court**") held a hearing (the "**Disclosure Statement Hearing**") at which it approved the *Disclosure Statement for Joint Chapter 11 Plan of Reorganization of Phoenix Services Topco, LLC, and Its Debtor Affiliates*, filed on April 4, 2023 (Docket No. 680) (as may be amended, modified, or supplemented, the "**Disclosure Statement**")[2] in Phoenix Services Topco, LLC and its debtor affiliates' chapter 11 cases (collectively, the "**Debtors**"), and thereafter entered an order (Docket No. 769) (the "**Order**") with respect thereto. The Order, among other things, authorizes the Debtors to solicit votes to accept or reject the *Joint Chapter 11 Plan of Reorganization of Phoenix Services Topco, LLC, and Its Debtor Affiliates*, filed on May 5, 2023 (Docket No. 753) (as may be amended, modified, or supplemented, the "**Proposed Plan**").

2. ***Confirmation Hearing***. A hearing to consider confirmation of the Proposed Plan (the "**Confirmation Hearing**") has been scheduled before the Honorable Mary F. Walrath, United States Bankruptcy Judge, in the Bankruptcy Court, 824 North Market Street, 5th Floor, Courtroom 4, Wilmington, Delaware 19801, on **June 21, 2023 at 10:30 a.m. (prevailing Eastern Time)**. The Confirmation Hearing may be adjourned or continued from time to time without further notice other than adjournments announced in open court or as indicated in any notice of agenda of matters scheduled for hearing filed by the Debtors with the Bankruptcy Court. The Proposed Plan may be modified, if necessary, prior to, during, or as a result of the Confirmation Hearing.

3. ***Voting Record Date***. The following holders of Claims against the Debtors as of **May 4, 2023** (the "**Voting Record Date**") are entitled to vote on the Proposed Plan:

Class	Description
Class 3	Prepetition Lender Claims

4. ***Voting Deadline***. All votes to accept or reject the Proposed Plan must be **actually received** by the Debtors' voting and tabulation agent, Stretto, Inc. ("**Stretto**"), by no later than **June 9, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. (prevailing Eastern Time)** (the "**Voting Deadline**"). Any failure to follow the voting instructions included with your Ballot may disqualify your Ballot and your vote.

5. ***Parties in Interest Not Entitled to Vote***. Holders of Unimpaired Claims and/or Interests in classes deemed to accept the Proposed Plan are not entitled to vote and will not receive a Ballot. In addition, holders of impaired Claims in classes deemed to reject the Proposed Plan are not entitled to vote and will not receive a Ballot. Such holders will instead receive a Notice of Non-Voting Status. Further, holders of Claims that are not classified under the Plan are not entitled to vote and will not receive a Ballot.

6. ***Objections to Confirmation***. The deadline to object or respond to confirmation of the Proposed Plan is **June 9, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. (prevailing Eastern Time)** (the "**Plan Objection Deadline**").

7. Objections and responses, if any, to confirmation of the Proposed Plan, must: (a) be in writing; (b) conform to the Bankruptcy Rules and the Local Rules; (c) set forth the name of the objecting party and the nature and amount of Claims or Interests held or asserted by the objecting party against the Debtors' estates or property; (d) provide the basis for the objection and the specific grounds therefor, and provide proposed language that, if accepted and incorporated by the Debtors, would obviate such objection; and (e) be filed, together with proof of service.

8. Registered users of the Bankruptcy Court's case filing system must electronically file their objections and responses. All other parties in interest must file their objections and responses in writing with the United States Bankruptcy Court Clerk's Office, 824 Market Street, 3rd Floor, Wilmington, Delaware 19801 to the attention of the chambers of the Honorable Mary F. Walrath, United States Bankruptcy Judge.

Any objections or responses must be served so that they are **actually received** by the following parties no later than the Plan Objection Deadline: (i) ***Counsel to the Debtors:*** Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP, 767 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10153, Attn: Ray C. Schrock, Esq., Jeffrey D. Saferstein, Esq., Garrett A. Fail, Esq., Email: ray.schrock@weil.com, jeffrey.saferstein@weil.com, garrett.fail@weil.com; (ii) ***Co-Counsel to the Debtors:*** Richards, Layton, & Finger, P.A., One Rodney Square, 920 North King Street, Wilmington, Delaware 19801, Attn: Daniel J. DeFranceschi, Esq., Zachary I. Shapiro, Esq., Email: defranceschi@rlf.com, shapiro@rlf.com; (iii) ***Office of the U.S. Trustee:*** Office of the U.S. Trustee for the District of Delaware, 844 King Street, Suite 2207, Lockbox 35, Wilmington, Delaware 19801, Attn: Linda Casey, Esq., Email: Linda.casey@usdoj.gov; (iv) ***Co-Counsel to the Consenting Prepetition Lender Claim Holders:*** Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP, 200 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10166, Attn: Scott Greenberg, Esq., Steven A. Domanowski, Esq., Matthew Williams, Esq., Jason Goldstein, Esq., Email: sgreenberg@gibsondunn.com, sdomanowski@gibsondunn.com, mjwilliams@gibsondunn.com, jgoldstein@gibsondunn.com; (v) ***Co-Counsel to the Consenting Prepetition Lender Claim Holders:*** Pachulski Stang Ziehl & Jones LLP, 919 N. Market Street, 17th Floor, P.O. Box 8705, Wilmington, Delaware 19899, Attn: Laura Davis Jones, Esq., Email: ljones@pszjlaw.com; (vi) ***Co-Counsel to the Creditors' Committee:*** Cole Schotz P.C., 500 Delaware Avenue, Suite 1410, Wilmington, DE 19801, Attn: Justin R. Alberto, Esq., Patrick J. Reilley, Esq., Michael E. Fitzpatrick, Esq., Email: jalberto@coleschotz.com, preilley@coleschotz.com, mfitzpatrick@coleschotz.com; and (vii) ***Co-Counsel to the Creditors' Committee:*** Squire Patton Boggs (US) LLP, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, 26th Floor, New York, NY 10036, Attn: Stephen D. Lerner, Esq., Norman N. Kinel, Esq., Travis A. McRoberts, Esq., Email: stephen.lerner@squirepb.com, norman.kinel@squirepb.com, travis.mcroberts@squirepb.com.

9. **IF ANY OBJECTION TO CONFIRMATION OF THE PROPOSED PLAN IS NOT FILED AND SERVED STRICTLY AS PRESCRIBED HEREIN, THE OBJECTING PARTY MAY BE BARRED FROM OBJECTING TO CONFIRMATION OF THE PROPOSED PLAN AND MAY NOT BE HEARD AT THE CONFIRMATION HEARING.**

10. ***Additional Information.*** Any party in interest wishing to obtain information about the solicitation procedures or copies of the Disclosure Statement or the Proposed Plan should contact the Debtors' voting and tabulation agent, Stretto, in writing: Phoenix Services Ballotting, c/o Stretto, 410 Exchange, Suite 100, Irvine, CA 92602, or by email at PhoenixInquiries@stretto.com. Interested parties may also review the Disclosure Statement and the Proposed Plan free of charge at https://cases.stretto.com/phoenix. In addition, the Disclosure Statement and Proposed Plan are on file with the Bankruptcy Court and may be reviewed by accessing the Bankruptcy Court's website: www.deb.uscourts.gov. Note that a PACER password and login are needed to access documents on the Bankruptcy Court's website. A PACER password can be obtained at: www.pacer.psc.uscourts.gov. Copies of the Disclosure Statement and Proposed Plan may also be examined by interested parties during normal business hours at the office of the Clerk of the Bankruptcy Court.

NOTICE REGARDING CERTAIN RELEASE, EXCULPATION AND INJUNCTION PROVISIONS IN THE PROPOSED PLAN

11. **Releases, Exculpation, and Injunctions under Article X. Please be advised that under Article X of the Proposed Plan:**

12. **Releases by the Debtors. As of the Effective Date, except for the right to enforce the Plan or any right or obligation arising under the Definitive Documents that remains in effect after the Effective Date, for good and valuable consideration, on and after the Effective Date, the Released Parties[3] shall be deemed released and discharged by the Debtors, the Reorganized Debtors, and the Estates, and any Person seeking to exercise the rights of the Estates, and any successors to the Debtors or any Estate representative appointed or selected pursuant to section 1123(b)(3) of the Bankruptcy Code, from any and all claims, obligations, rights, suits, judgments, damages, demands, debts, rights, Causes of Action, remedies, losses, and liabilities whatsoever, whether known or unknown, foreseen or unforeseen, liquidated or unliquidated, matured or unmatured, contingent or fixed, existing or hereinafter arising, in law, equity or otherwise, including any derivative claims asserted or assertable on behalf of the Debtors, the Reorganized Debtors, or the Estates, that the Debtors, the Reorganized Debtors, or the Estates would have been legally entitled to assert in their own right (whether individually or collectively) or on behalf of the holder of any Claim or Interest or other Entity, based on or relating to, or in any manner arising from, in whole or in part, the Debtors, the Estates, the conduct of the Debtors' businesses, the Chapter 11 Cases, the purchase, sale or rescission of the purchase or sale of any Security of the Debtors or the Reorganized Debtors, the subject matter of, or the transactions or events giving rise to, any Claim or Interest that is treated in the Plan, the business or contractual arrangements between the Debtors and any Released Party, the Restructuring Transactions, or any of the transactions that are the subject of the Restructuring Transactions related to any Claim or Interest before or during the Chapter 11 Cases, the Disclosure Statement, the Plan, and the Definitive Documents, or any related agreements, instruments, or other documents, and the negotiation, formulation, or preparation thereof, the solicitation of votes with respect to the Plan, or any other act or omission, in all cases based upon any act or omission, transaction, agreement, event, or other occurrence taking place on or before the Effective Date; provided, that, the foregoing shall not release any Cause of Action arising from an act or omission determined by Final Order to constitute gross negligence, willful misconduct, or intentional fraud.**

13. **Releases by Certain Holders of Claims and Interests. As of the Effective Date, except for the right to enforce the Plan or any right or obligation arising under the Definitive Documents that remains in effect after the Effective Date, for good and valuable consideration, on and after the Effective Date, except as specifically set forth elsewhere in the Plan, the Releasing Parties[4] conclusively, absolutely, unconditionally, irrevocably, and forever discharge and release (and each entity so discharged and released shall be deemed discharged and released by the Releasing Parties) the Released Parties and their respective property from any and all claims, obligations, rights, suits, damages, Causes of Action, remedies, and liabilities whatsoever (including contract claims, claims under ERISA and all other statutory claims, claims for contributions, withdrawal liability, reallocation liability, redetermination liability, interest on any amounts, liquidated damages, claims for attorneys' fees or any costs or expenses whatsoever), whether known or unknown, foreseen or unforeseen, liquidated or unliquidated, matured or unmatured, contingent or fixed, existing or hereinafter arising, in law, equity or otherwise, including any derivative claims asserted or assertable on behalf of the Debtors, the Reorganized Debtors, or the Estates, that such Entity would have been legally entitled to assert in its own right (whether individually or collectively) based on or relating to, or in any manner arising from, in whole or in part, the Debtors, the Estates, the Restructuring Transactions, the Chapter 11 Cases, the purchase, sale or rescission of the purchase or sale of any Security of the Debtors or the Reorganized Debtors, the subject matter of, or the transactions or events giving rise to, any Claim or Interest that is treated in the Plan, the business or contractual arrangements between any Debtor and any Released Party (other than assumed contracts or leases), any of the transactions that are the subject of the Restructuring Transactions related to any Claims and Interests before or during the Chapter 11 Cases, the negotiation, formulation, preparation or consummation of the Plan (including the Plan Supplement), the Definitive Documents, or any related agreements, instruments or other documents, or the solicitation of votes with respect to the Plan, in all cases based upon any other act or omission, transaction, agreement, event or other occurrence taking place on or before the Effective Date; provided, that, the foregoing shall not release any Cause of Action arising from an act or omission determined by Final Order to constitute gross negligence, willful misconduct, or intentional fraud.**

14. **Exculpation. Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, and to the maximum extent permitted by applicable law, no Exculpated Party[5] will have or incur, and each Exculpated Party is hereby released and exculpated from, any claim, obligation, suit, judgment, damage, demand, debt, right, Cause of Action, remedy, loss, and liability for any claim arising between the Petition Date and the Effective Date in connection with or arising out of the administration of the Chapter 11 Cases, the negotiation, formulation, preparation, dissemination, implementation, administration, confirmation, consummation, and pursuit of the Disclosure Statement, the Restructuring Transactions, the Plan, or the solicitation of votes for, or confirmation of, the Plan, the funding or consummation of the Plan (including the Plan Supplement), the Definitive Documents, or any related agreements, instruments, or other documents, the solicitation of votes on the Plan; the offer, issuance, and distribution of any Securities issued or to be issued pursuant to the Plan, whether or not such distribution occurs following the Effective Date, the occurrence of the Effective Date, negotiations regarding or concerning any of the foregoing, or the administration of the Plan or property to be distributed under the Plan, except for acts or omissions determined by Final Order to constitute gross negligence, willful misconduct, or intentional fraud, but in all respects, such Exculpated Parties shall be entitled to reasonably rely upon the advice of counsel with respect to their duties and responsibilities. This exculpation shall be in addition to, and not in limitation of, all other releases, indemnities, exculpations and any other applicable law or rules protecting such Exculpated Parties from liability.**

15. **Injunction**

(a) Upon entry of the Confirmation Order, all holders of Claims and Interests and other parties in interest, along with their respective present or former employees, agents, officers, directors, principals, and affiliates, shall be enjoined from taking any actions to interfere with the implementation or consummation of the Plan in relation to any Claim or Interest extinguished, discharged, released or treated pursuant to the Plan.

(b) Except as expressly provided in the Plan, the Confirmation Order, or a separate order of the Bankruptcy Court or as agreed to by the Debtors and a holder of a Claim against or Interest in the Debtors, all Entities who have held, hold, or may hold Claims against or Interests in any or all of the Debtors (whether proof of such Claims or Interests has been filed or not and whether or not such Entities vote in favor of, against or abstain from voting on the Plan or are presumed to have accepted or deemed to have rejected the Plan) and other parties in interest, along with their respective present or former employees, agents, officers, directors, principals, and affiliates are permanently enjoined, on and after the Effective Date, solely with respect to any Claims, Interests, and Causes of Action that will be or are extinguished, discharged, released, or treated pursuant to the Plan from (i) commencing, conducting, or continuing in any manner, directly or indirectly, any suit, action, or other proceeding of any kind (including any proceeding in a judicial, arbitral, administrative or other forum) against or affecting the Released Parties or the property of any of the Released Parties; (ii) enforcing, levying, attaching (including any prejudgment attachment), collecting, or otherwise recovering by any manner or means, whether directly or indirectly, any judgment, award, decree, or order against the Released Parties or the property of any of the Released Parties; (iii) creating, perfecting, or otherwise enforcing in any manner, directly or indirectly, any encumbrance of any kind against the Released Parties or the property of any of the Released Parties; (iv) asserting any right of setoff, directly or indirectly, against any obligation due the Released Parties or the property of any of the Released Parties, except as contemplated or allowed by the Plan; and (v) acting or proceeding in any manner, in any place whatsoever, that does not conform to or comply with the provisions of the Plan.

(c) The injunctions in Section 10.5 of the Plan shall extend to any successors of the Debtors and the Reorganized Debtors and their respective property and interests in property.

Except as is set forth in the Proposed Plan, election to withhold consent to the releases contained within Article X of the Proposed Plan is at the holders' option.

16. The Proposed Plan also contains other related provisions that may affect your rights against the Debtors.

YOU ARE ADVISED TO CAREFULLY REVIEW AND CONSIDER THE PROPOSED PLAN, INCLUDING THE DISCHARGE, INJUNCTION, RELEASE, AND EXCULPATION PROVISIONS, AS YOUR RIGHTS MAY BE AFFECTED.

RICHARDS, LAYTON & FINGER, P.A., Daniel J. DeFranceschi, Esq. (No. 2732), Zachary I. Shapiro, Esq. (No. 5103), Matthew P. Milana, Esq. (No. 6681), Emily R. Mathews, Esq. (No. 6866), One Rodney Square, 920 North King Street, Wilmington, Delaware 19801, Telephone: (302) 651-7700, Facsimile: (302) 651-7701 -and- **WEIL, GOTSHAL & MANGES LLP,** Ray C. Schrock, Esq. (admitted *pro hac vice*), Jeffrey D. Saferstein, Esq. (admitted *pro hac vice*), Garrett A. Fail, Esq. (admitted *pro hac vice*), 767 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10153, Telephone: (212) 310-8000, Facsimile: (212) 310-8007, *Attorneys for the Debtors and Debtors in Possession*

[1] The Debtors in these chapter 11 cases, along with the last four digits of each Debtor's federal tax identification number, are: Phoenix Services Topco, LLC (4517); Phoenix Services Parent, LLC (8023); Phoenix Services Holdings Corp. (1330); Phoenix Services International LLC (6493); Metal Services LLC (8793); Terracentric Materials LLC (0673); Cool Springs LLC (8687); Metal Services Investment LLC (2924); and Phoenix Receivables, LLC (not applicable). The Debtors' mailing address is 4 Radnor Corporate Center, Suite 520, 100 Matsonford Road, Radnor, Pennsylvania 19087.

[2] Capitalized terms used but not defined herein shall have the meanings ascribed to them in the Disclosure Statement or the Proposed Plan (as defined herein), as applicable, or as the context otherwise requires.

[3] "**Released Parties**" means, collectively, and in each case, solely in their capacities as such: (a) the Debtors; (b) the Reorganized Debtors; (c) the Reorganized Debtor Plan Administrator; (d) the DIP Lenders; (e) the DIP Agent; (f) the Consenting Lenders, (g) each Releasing Prepetition Lender; (h) ANRP II Phoenix Services Holdings (LP); (i) the Prepetition First Lien Administrative Agent; and (j) with respect to each of the foregoing Entities in clauses (a) through (i), all Related Parties. For the avoidance of doubt, the Debtors' current and former directors, managers, officers, employees, professionals, and shareholders shall each be a Released Party under the Plan.

[4] "**Releasing Parties**" means, collectively, and in each case, solely in their capacities as such: (a) the Debtors; (b) the Reorganized Debtors; (c) the Reorganized Debtor Plan Administrator; (d) the DIP Lenders; (e) the DIP Agent; (f) the Consenting Lenders; (g) each Releasing Prepetition Lender; (h) ANRP II Phoenix Services Holdings (LP); (i) the Prepetition First Lien Administrative Agent; and (j) with respect to each of the foregoing Entities in clauses (a) through (i), all of their respective Related Parties solely with respect to claims that such Entities could have properly asserted on behalf of such Entities in clauses (a) through (i).

[5] "**Exculpated Parties**" means, collectively, in each case, solely in their capacities as such: (a) the Debtors and the Estates; (b) the Debtors' current and former directors, officers, attorneys, accountants, financial advisors, investment bankers, and other professionals; (c) the Creditors' Committee; (d) the Creditors' Committee's members and professionals; and (e) with respect to each of the foregoing Entities in clauses (a) through (d), such Entities' successors and assigns.

INTERNATIONAL

Europe Fears U.S. Aid Will Divert Investment in Battery Factories

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE

Hamburg, Germany. The company had considered postponing to invest in the United States instead.

"It's definitely attractive to be in America right now," Emma Nehrenheim, Northvolt's chief environmental officer, said in a recent interview in Vasteras. Northvolt declined to comment in detail on the discussions about the Hamburg plant, which the company committed to in May.

The tussle over Northvolt's plans is an example of the intense and, some European officials say, counterproductive competition between the United States and Europe as they try to acquire the building blocks of electric vehicle manufacturing to avoid becoming dependent on China, which dominates the battery supply chain.

Auto experts said that the tax credits and other incentives offered by President Biden's main climate policy, the Inflation Reduction Act, had siphoned some investment from Europe and put pressure on European countries to offer their own incentives.

The United States has provoked a "massive subsidy race," Cecilia Malmstrom, a former European trade commissioner, said during a panel discussion in April at the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington. She called on leaders to "jointly invest in the green transition and not compete against each other."

Biden officials have argued that U.S. and European policies are complementary. They have noted that the government and private money going into electric cars and batteries would lower prices for car buyers and put more emission-free vehicles on the road.

U.S. officials add that construction of battery factories and plants to process lithium and other materials is booming on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

Efforts by governments to promote electric vehicles "will spur a degree of technological innovation and cost cutting that will be beneficial not only to Europe and the United States, but to the global economy and to our global effort to meet the challenge that climate change presents," Wally Adeyemo, the deputy Treasury secretary, said in a recent interview.

The Biden administration has also been talking with European officials about allowing cars made from European battery materials and components to qualify for U.S. tax credits. And the administration has interpreted the I.R.A., which Mr. Biden signed in August, to leave room for producers in Europe and elsewhere to benefit.

"You're seeing less of a concern from Europe that those companies may be lured away from Europe to America," said Abigail Wulf, who directs the Center for Critical Minerals Strategy at SAFE, a nonprofit organization.

Still, the law has forced European leaders to put new industrial policies in place.

In March, the European Commission, the administrative arm of the European Union, proposed the Critical Raw Materials Act, legislation to ensure supplies of lithium, nickel and other battery materials. One piece of the legislation calls for the E.U. to process at least 40 percent of the raw materials that the car industry needs within its own borders. The 27-nation alliance has also let countries provide more financial support to suppliers and manufacturers.

The money that the United States and Europe are pouring into electric vehicles will encourage sales, said Julia Poliscanova, a senior director at Transport & Environment, an advocacy group in Brussels. The legislation, which will need the approval of the European Parliament and the leaders of E.U. countries, would also bring some coherence to the fragmented policies of national governments, she said.

But Ms. Poliscanova added that European and U.S. policies risk canceling each other out. "Because everyone is scaling up at the same time, it's a zero-sum game," she said.

Business executives have complained that applying for financial aid in Europe is bureaucratic and slow. The Inflation Reduction Act, with its emphasis on tax credits, is simpler and faster, said Tom Einar Jensen, chief executive of the battery maker Freyr, which is building a factory in Mo i Rana, in northern Norway, and has plans to construct more plants in Finland and near Atlanta.

The I.R.A. has prompted "a dramatic increase in uptick in interest for batteries produced in the U.S.," Mr. Jensen said in an interview.

The future of European auto manufacturing is at stake, particularly for German companies. Mercedes-Benz, BMW and Volkswagen have already lost market share in China to local automakers like BYD. Chinese automakers, including BYD and SAIC, are also making inroads in Europe. Selling cars under the British brand MG, SAIC has amassed 5 percent of the European electric vehicle market, putting it ahead of Toyota and Ford in that fast-growing segment.

European carmakers are frantically trying to build the supply chains they need to churn out electric vehicles.

In France, President Emmanuel Macron wants to convert a northern region where factory jobs have been in decline into a hub of battery production.

On Tuesday, Automotive Cells Company, a joint venture between Stellantis, Mercedes-Benz and TotalEnergies, inaugurated a factory in Billy-Berclau Douvrin, France, that aims to produce 300,000 electric batteries annually by the end of 2024. A.C.C. also plans to invest a total of 7.3 billion euros, or $7.8 billion, in Europe, including opening factories in Germany and in Italy, a deal sealed with 1.3 billion euros in public aid.

In Salzgitter, Germany, some 25 miles from Volkswagen's headquarters, steel beams tower above concrete foundations as excavators and dump trucks hum nearby. In a matter of months, the outlines of a battery factory have risen out of a field.

Volkswagen hopes to have battery-making machines installed before the end of the summer. By 2025, the automaker aims to produce battery cells for up to 500,000 electric vehicles a year — a timeline that the company said was possible only because the factory was being built on land it owned.

Volkswagen is also building a factory in Ontario, but the company made the decision to do so only after the Canadian government matched U.S. incentives.

In Guben, a small city on Germany's border with Poland, Rock Tech Lithium, a Canadian company, is building a plant to process lithium ore. Mercedes has an agreement with Rock Tech to supply lithium to its battery producers.

These projects won't reach full production for several years. Recently, the Guben site was an open field. The only construction activity was a truck that dumped loads of crushed rock, making an ear-piercing screech.

Europe has some advantages, including a strong demand for electric cars: About 14 percent of new cars sold in the E.U. in the first three months of this year were battery powered, according to Schmidt Automotive Research, twice as many as in the United States.

But if Europe doesn't move quickly to aid the battery industry, "you will really lose momentum on the ground versus the North American market," said Dirk Harbecke, chief executive of Rock Tech.

Chinese battery companies have largely avoided the United States for fear of a political backlash. But Chinese battery firms have announced investments in Europe worth $17.5 billion since 2018, according to the Mercator Institute for China Studies and the Rhodium Group.

Political tension between Western governments and China has put German carmakers in a delicate position. They do not want to be overly dependent on Chinese supplies, but they cannot afford to displease the Chinese government.

BMW, Volkswagen and Volvo plan to buy cells from a factory in Arnstadt, Germany, run by CATL, a Chinese company that is currently the world's largest maker of electric vehicle batteries.

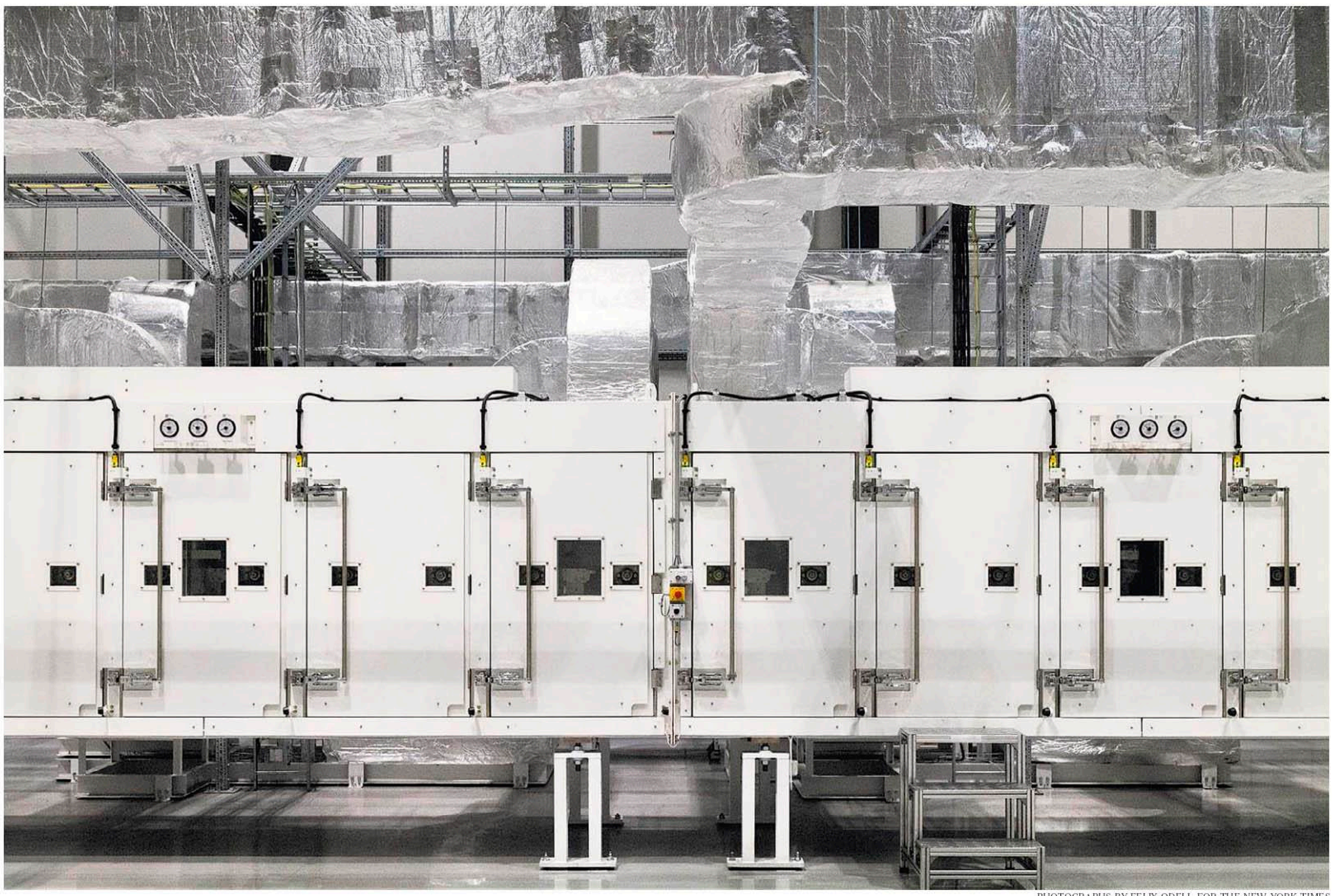
To balance their reliance on Chinese suppliers, European executives and leaders are keen to work with Northvolt, whose chief executive, Peter Carlsson, oversaw Tesla's supply chain for more than four years.

Northvolt wants to control all the steps of making batteries, including refining lithium and recycling old cells. That should help Europe achieve supply chain independence and ensure that batteries are produced in the most environmentally responsible way possible, said Ms. Nehrenheim, who is also a member of the Northvolt management board. "We're de-risking Europe," she said.

The company develops manufacturing techniques at its complex in Vasteras. Northvolt's first full-scale factory, at a site in Sweden 125 miles south of the Arctic Circle chosen for its abundant hydropower, is the size of the Pentagon. Northvolt also plans to build a U.S. factory but has not yet announced a site.

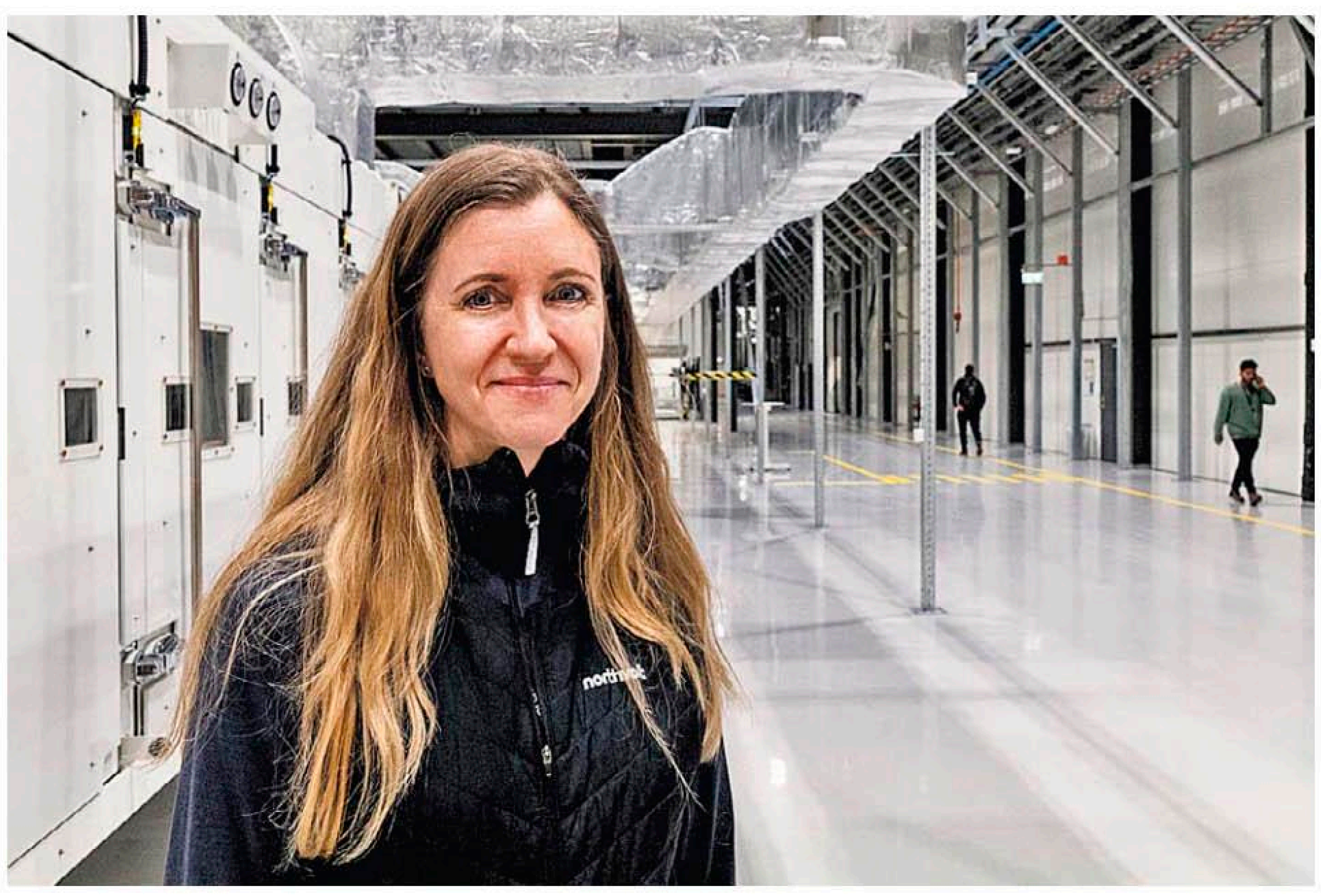
Still, the company is ramping up production and is not among the world's top 10 battery suppliers, according to SNE Research, a consulting firm. And construction on its Hamburg plant is on hold until E.U. officials approve German subsidies.

Jack Ewing reported from Vasteras, and Melissa Eddy from Salzgitter, Germany. Ana Swanson contributed reporting from Washington, and Liz Alderman from Paris.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY FELIX ODELL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Ovens where the anode electrode is dried. Auto experts say that tax credits and other incentives offered under President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act have siphoned some investment from Europe.



"It's definitely attractive to be in America right now," said Emma Nehrenheim, Northvolt's chief environmental officer.

FDIC

PUBLICATION NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEPOSITORS OF SILICON VALLEY BANK SANTA CLARA, CA

On **March 10, 2023** (the "Closing Date"), the **California Department of Financial Protection and Innovation** closed **Silicon Valley Bank, Santa Clara, CA** (the "Failed Institution") and appointed the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (the "FDIC") as Receiver (the "Receiver") to handle all matters relating to the Failed Institution.

TO THE CREDITORS OF THE FAILED INSTITUTION

All creditors having claims against the Failed Institution must submit their claims in writing, together with proof of the claims, to the Receiver **on or before July 10, 2023** (the "Claims Bar Date"). You may submit your proof of claim form via our interactive FDIC Claims Portal at https://resolutions.fdic.gov/claimsportal/s/, the FDIC website at https://www.fdic.gov/resources/forms/deposit-claims-and-asset-sales/index.html, or by calling 972-761-8677.

Claims may be submitted through the FDIC Claims Portal, or mailed to the following address:

FDIC as Receiver of
Silicon Valley Bank
600 North Pearl Street, Suite 700
Dallas, TX 75201
Attention: Claim Agent **10539**

Under federal law 12 U.S.C. Section 1821(d)(5)(C), failure to file a claim on or before the Claims Bar Date will result in the Receiver disallowing the claim. The disallowance is final.

NOTE TO CLASS CLAIMANTS: By law, the Receiver will not accept a claim filed on behalf of a proposed class of individuals or entities or a class of individuals or entities certified by a court. EACH individual or entity must file a separate claim with the Receiver.

TO THE DEPOSITORS OF SILICON VALLEY BANK

On **March 10, 2023,** the FDIC, which insures your deposits in its corporate capacity, arranged for the transfer of all deposits ("Deposits") - including the uninsured amounts – to **SILICON VALLEY BRIDGE BANK, N.A.** On **March 27, 2023,** the **Office of the Comptroller of the Currency** closed **SILICON VALLEY BRIDGE BANK, N.A., SANTA CLARA, CA** and appointed the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation as Receiver to handle all matters relating to the Failed Institution. Please see the Silicon Valley Bridge Bank, N.A. publication notice for information about your deposits or visit www.FDIC.gov.

FDIC

PUBLICATION NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEPOSITORS OF SIGNATURE BANK NEW YORK, NY

On **March 12, 2023** (the "Closing Date"), the **New York State Department of Financial Services closed SIGNATURE BANK, New York, NY** (the "Failed Institution") and appointed the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (the "FDIC") as Receiver (the "Receiver") to handle all matters relating to the Failed Institution.

TO THE CREDITORS OF THE FAILED INSTITUTION

All creditors having claims against the Failed Institution must submit their claims in writing, together with proof of the claims, to the Receiver **on or before July 17, 2023** (the "Claims Bar Date"). You may submit your proof of claim form via our interactive FDIC Claims Portal at https://resolutions.fdic.gov/claimsportal/s/, the FDIC website at https://www.fdic.gov/resources/forms/deposit-claims-and-asset-sales/index.html, or by calling 972-761-8677.

Claims may be submitted through the FDIC Claims Portal, or mailed to the following address:

FDIC as Receiver of
Signature Bank
600 Pearl Street, Suite 700, Dallas, TX 75201
Attention: Claim Agent **10540**

Under federal law 12 U.S.C. Section 1821(d)(5)(C), failure to file a claim on or before the Claims Bar Date will result in the Receiver disallowing the claim. The disallowance is final.

NOTE TO CLASS CLAIMANTS: By law, the Receiver will not accept a claim filed on behalf of a proposed class of individuals or entities or a class of individuals or entities certified by a court. EACH individual or entity must file a separate claim with the Receiver.

TO THE DEPOSITORS OF SIGNATURE BANK

On **March 12, 2023,** the FDIC, which insures your deposits in its corporate capacity, arranged for the transfer of all deposits ("Deposits") - including the uninsured amounts – to **SIGNATURE BRIDGE BANK, N.A.** On **March 20, 2023,** the **Office of the Comptroller of the Currency** closed **SIGNATURE BRIDGE BANK, N.A., New York, NY** and appointed the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation as Receiver to handle all matters relating to the Failed Institution. Please see the Signature Bridge Bank, N.A. publication notice for information about your deposits or visit www.FDIC.gov.

INTERNATIONAL

Why Do Food Prices Remain Stubbornly High in Europe?

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE

Persistent food inflation is squeezing low-income households and troubling European politicians. (In Italy, the government held a meeting last month to discuss soaring pasta prices.)

At the same time, the major costs that go into making food products, including fuel, wheat and other agricultural commodities, have been falling in international markets for much of the last year — raising questions about why food prices for consumers remain so high in Europe. And with rising labor costs and the possibility of profiteering, food prices are unlikely to come down anytime soon. More broadly, rising prices could also put pressure on central banks to keep interest rates high, potentially restraining economic growth.

What factors are driving up the price of food?

Behind the sticker price for a loaf of bread includes the costs for not only key ingredients but also processing, packaging, transport, wages, storage and company markups.

A United Nations index of global food commodity prices, like wheat, meat and vegetable oil, peaked in March 2022, immediately after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which is one of the largest grain producers. The war disrupted grain and oil production in the region and had global impact, too, worsening food crises in parts of East Africa and the Middle East.

But the worst was avoided, in part because of a deal to export grain from Ukraine. European wheat prices have declined about 40 percent since last May. Global vegetable oil prices are down about 50 percent. But there is still a ways to go: The United Nations' food price index was 34 percent higher in April than its 2019 average.

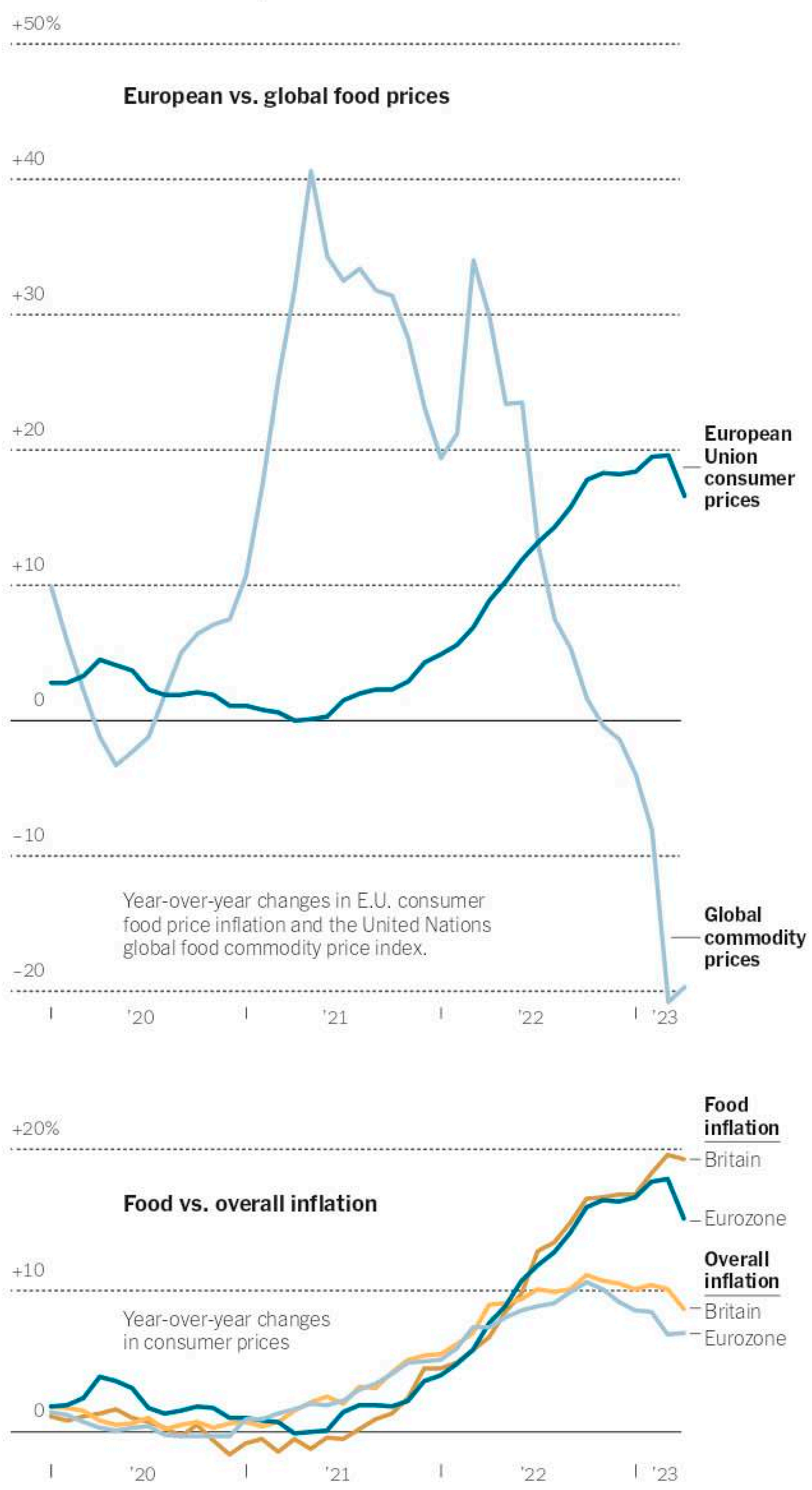
Aside from commodity prices, Europe has experienced particularly harsh increases in costs along the food supply chain.

Energy prices soared because the war forced Europe to rapidly replace Russian gas with new supplies, pushing up the costs of food production, transport and storage.

Though wholesale energy prices have fallen back down recently, retailers warn there is a long lag — perhaps up to a year — before consumers will see the benefits of that because energy contracts were made months before, most likely reflecting those higher prices.

And the tight labor markets in Europe with high job vacancy rates and low levels of unemployment are forcing employers, including food companies, to push up wages to attract workers. This in turn drives up costs for businesses, including in the food sector.

Food Prices Have Risen Fastest in Europe



Sources: U.K. Office for National Statistics; Eurostat; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

KARL RUSSELL/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Is company profiteering keeping prices high?

Suspicions are growing among consumers, trade unions and some economists that inflation could be kept needlessly high by companies raising prices above their costs to protect profit margins. The European Central Bank said that at the end of last year, corporate profits were contributing to domestic inflation as much as wage growth, but it did not say if any industries had made excessive profits.

Economists at Allianz, the German insurer and asset manager, estimate that 10 to 20 percent of food inflation in Europe can be attributed to profiteering. "There is part of the food price inflation that we see which is not explainable, easily," said Ludovic Subran, the chief economist at Allianz.

But the lack of detailed data about corporate profits and supply chains has caused a rift in economic opinions.

Some economists and food retailers have pointed fingers at big global food producers, which have sustained double-digit profit margins while raising prices. In April, the Swiss giant Nestlé said it expected its profit margin this year to be about the same as it was last year, about 17 percent, while it reported raising prices almost 10 percent in the first quarter.

Even taking into account expenses like transport and accounting for pricing lags from farms to shelves, Mr. Subran said he would have expected food inflation to come down by now.

In Britain, some economists are telling a different story. Michael Saunders, an economist at Oxford Economics and former rate-setter at the Bank of England, said in a note to clients in May that "greedflation" was not the culprit. Most of the increase in inflation reflects the higher cost of energy and other commodities, he said.

Rather than rising, total profits for nonfinancial companies in Britain, excluding the oil and gas industry, have fallen over the last year, he said.

Britain's competition regulator also said that it hadn't seen evidence of competition concerns in the grocery sector, but that it was stepping up its investigation into "cost of living pressures."

When will food prices reach their peak?

Despite well-publicized cuts to milk prices in Britain, food prices in general are unlikely to go down in the near future.

Instead, policymakers are closely watching for a slowdown in the rate of increases.

There are tentative signs that the pace of food inflation — the double-digit increase in annual prices — has reached its pinnacle. In April, the rate fell in the European Union for the first time in two years.

But the slowdown from here is likely to be gradual.

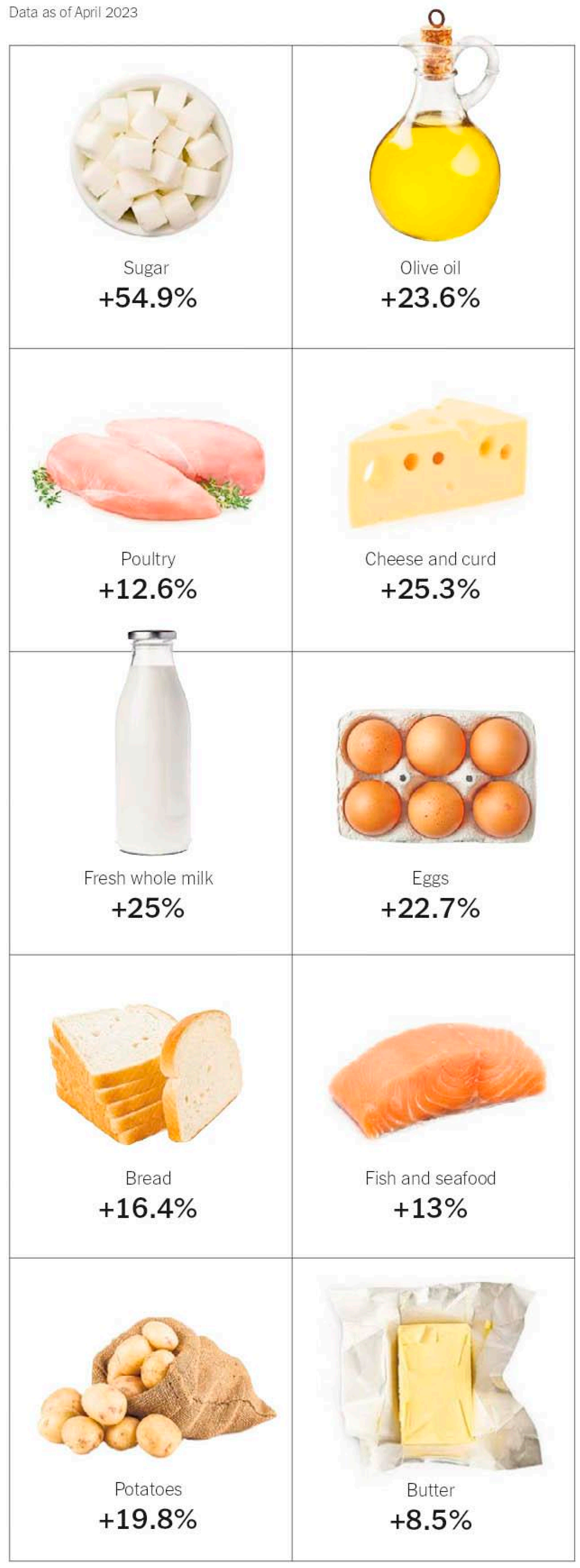
"It appears to be taking longer for food price pressures to work their way through the system this time than we had expected," Andrew Bailey, the governor of the Bank of England, said last month.

Across the continent, some governments are intervening by capping prices on food essentials, rather than waiting for the economic debates about corporate profiteering to play out. In France, the government is pushing an "anti-inflation quarter," asking food retailers to cut prices on some products until June. But the finance minister, Bruno Le Maire, said last month that he wanted food producers to contribute more to the effort, warning they could face tax penalties to recover any margins unfairly made at the expense of consumers if they refuse to return to negotiations.

These efforts may help some shoppers, but on the whole there is little to comfort Europeans. Food prices are unlikely to decline — it's likely only that the pace of increases will slow later this year.

The Percent Increase in Staple Food Prices In the E.U. Over the Last Year

Data as of April 2023



Source: Eurostat

REBECCA LIEBERMAN/THE NEW YORK TIMES

PUBLICATION NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEPOSITORS OF SIGNATURE BRIDGE BANK, N.A. NEW YORK, NY

FDIC

On **March 20, 2023** (the "Closing Date"), the **Office of the Comptroller of the Currency** closed **SIGNATURE BRIDGE BANK, N.A., New York, NY** (the "Failed Institution") and appointed the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (the "FDIC") as Receiver (the "Receiver") to handle all matters relating to the Failed Institution.

TO THE CREDITORS OF THE FAILED INSTITUTION

All creditors having claims against the Failed Institution must submit their claims in writing, together with proof of the claims, to the Receiver **on or before July 17, 2023** (the "Claims Bar Date"). You may submit your proof of claim form via our interactive FDIC Claims Portal at https://resolutions.fdic.gov/claimsportal/s/, the FDIC website at https://www.fdic.gov/resources/forms/deposit-claims-and-asset-sales/index.html, or by calling 972-761-8677.

Claims may be submitted through the FDIC Claims Portal, or mailed to the following address:

FDIC as Receiver of
Signature Bridge Bank, N.A.
600 Pearl Street, Suite 700, Dallas, TX 75201
Attention: Claim Agent **10541**

Under federal law 12 U.S.C. Section 1821(d)(5)(C), failure to file a claim on or before the Claims Bar Date will result in the Receiver disallowing the claim. The disallowance is final.

NOTE TO CLASS CLAIMANTS: By law, the Receiver will not accept a claim filed on behalf of a proposed class of individuals or entities or a class of individuals or entities certified by a court. EACH individual or entity must file a separate claim with the Receiver.

TO THE DEPOSITORS OF THE FAILED INSTITUTION

The FDIC, which insures your deposits in its corporate capacity, arranged for the transfer of all deposits ("Deposits") - including the uninsured amounts - at the Failed Institution to another insured depository institution, **Flagstar Bank, N.A., Hicksville, NY** (the "New Institution"). This arrangement should minimize any inconvenience from the closing of the Failed Institution.

The vast majority of deposits, with the exception of those related to the digital banking business, were transferred to **Flagstar Bank, N.A.** with full ownership rights and capacities, and those accounts will continue to be insured by the FDIC up to the insurance limit. Digital banking business depositors, though, had until April 5, 2023, to close their accounts by contacting **Flagstar Bank, N.A**. If you are a depositor with accounts related to the digital banking business and you have not received any funds due, please contact the FDIC at (972) 761-2112.

If you disagree with the FDIC's determination of your insurance coverage as represented by the account(s) made available at the New Institution, you may request a review of the FDIC's determination in the United States District Court where the Failed Institution was located. You must request this review no later than 60 days after the date on which your deposits became available to you at **Flagstar Bank, N.A.**. Requesting a review will not prevent you from using the funds in your new account.

Unless you have deposits related to the digital banking business, you may leave your Deposits in the New Institution, but you must take action to claim ownership of your Deposits. Under federal law (Unclaimed Deposits Amendments Act of 1993 (12 U.S.C. Section 1822(e)), you must claim ownership of your deposits at **Flagstar Bank, N.A.** within eighteen (18) months from the Closing Date, which is **September 20, 2024. Official Items issued by the Failed Institution, such as, cashier's checks, dividend checks, interest checks, expense checks, and money orders are considered Deposits and must also be claimed within 18 months from the Closing Date**. You may claim your deposits at **Flagstar Bank, N.A**. by taking any one of the following actions. If you have more than one deposit account, your action will automatically claim your deposits for all accounts.

1. Make a deposit to or withdrawal from your account(s), including writing a check on any account, automatic direct deposits, or automatic withdrawals.
2. Execute a new signature card on your account(s), enter into a new deposit agreement with the New Institution, change the ownership on your account(s), or renegotiate the terms of your certificate of deposit account(s).
3. Provide the New Institution with a completed change of address form.
4. Write to the New Institution at the address below and ask that your account(s) remain active. In your letter, include the type of the account(s): checking, savings, money market, etc., the name(s) on the account(s), the account number(s), and the signature of an authorized signer on the account(s), with your name and address.

102 Duffy Avenue, Hicksville, NY 11801

If you do not claim ownership of your Deposits at the New Institution by **September 20, 2024**, federal law requires these unclaimed deposits be transferred to the State's Unclaimed Property Division, according to your address listed with the Failed Institution. If your address is outside of the United States, the FDIC will deliver your deposits to the State in which the Failed Institution had its main office. According to the Unclaimed Deposits Amendments Act of 1993 (12 U.S.C. Section 1822(e)), **you will have ten years to claim your deposits from the State's Unclaimed Property Division according to the state's unclaimed property laws. If you do not claim your deposits from the State within the ten-year period, federal law prohibits you from claiming your deposits.**

If the State does not take custody of your Deposits, after the 18-month period, you may claim your Deposits from the FDIC until the receivership is terminated. A receivership can be terminated at any time. Once the receivership terminates, you will not be able to claim your deposits.

If you have a loan with the Failed Institution, and you would like to discuss offsetting your insured and/or uninsured Deposit(s) against the loan, visit the FDIC Claims Portal (https://resolutions.fdic.gov/claimsportal/s/), or call 972-761-2112.

PUBLICATION NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEPOSITORS OF SILICON VALLEY BRIDGE BANK, N.A. SANTA CLARA, CA

FDIC

On **March 27, 2023** (the "Closing Date"), the **Office of the Comptroller of the Currency** closed **SILICON VALLEY BRIDGE BANK, N.A., Santa Clara, CA** (the "Failed Institution") and appointed the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (the "FDIC") as Receiver (the "Receiver") to handle all matters relating to the Failed Institution.

TO THE CREDITORS OF THE FAILED INSTITUTION

All creditors having claims against the Failed Institution must submit their claims in writing, together with proof of the claims, to the Receiver **on or before July 10, 2023** (the "Claims Bar Date"). You may submit your proof of claim form via our interactive FDIC Claims Portal at https://resolutions.fdic.gov/claimsportal/s/, the FDIC website at https://www.fdic.gov/resources/forms/deposit-claims-and-asset-sales/index.html, or by calling 972-761-8677.

Claims may be submitted through the FDIC Claims Portal, or mailed to the following address:

FDIC as Receiver of
Silicon Valley Bridge Bank, N.A.
600 North Pearl Street, Suite 700
Dallas, TX 75201
Attention: Claim Agent **10542**

Under federal law 12 U.S.C. Section 1821(d)(5)(C), failure to file a claim on or before the Claims Bar Date will result in the Receiver disallowing the claim. The disallowance is final.

NOTE TO CLASS CLAIMANTS: By law, the Receiver will not accept a claim filed on behalf of a proposed class of individuals or entities or a class of individuals or entities certified by a court. EACH individual or entity must file a separate claim with the Receiver.

TO THE DEPOSITORS OF THE FAILED INSTITUTION

The FDIC, which insures your deposits in its corporate capacity, arranged for the transfer of all deposits ("Deposits") - including the uninsured amounts - at the Failed Institution to another insured depository institution, **First–Citizens Bank & Trust Company, Raleigh, NC** (the "New Institution"). This arrangement should minimize any inconvenience from the closing of the Failed Institution.

All deposits were fully insured and transferred to **First–Citizens Bank & Trust Company, Raleigh, NC.** If you disagree with the FDIC's determination of your insurance coverage as represented by the account(s) made available at the New Institution, you may request a review of the FDIC's determination in the United States District Court where the Failed Institution was located. You must request this review no later than 60 days after the date on which your deposits became available to you at **First–Citizens Bank & Trust Company, Raleigh, NC.** Requesting a review will not prevent you from using the funds in your new account.

You may leave your Deposits in the New Institution, but you must take action to claim ownership of your Deposits. Under federal law (Unclaimed Deposits Amendments Act of 1993 (12 U.S.C. Section 1822(e)), you must claim ownership of your deposits at **First–Citizens Bank & Trust Company, Raleigh, NC** within eighteen (18) months from the Closing Date, which is **September 27, 2024. Official Items issued by the Failed Institution; such as, cashier's checks, dividend checks, interest checks, expense checks, and money orders are considered Deposits and must also be claimed within 18 months from the Closing Date**. You may claim your deposits at **First–Citizens Bank & Trust Company, Raleigh, NC** by taking any one of the following actions. If you have more than one deposit account, your action will automatically claim your deposits for all accounts.

1. Make a deposit to or withdrawal from your account(s), including writing a check on any account, automatic direct deposits, or automatic withdrawals.
2. Execute a new signature card on your account(s), enter into a new deposit agreement with the New Institution, change the ownership on your account(s), or renegotiate the terms of your certificate of deposit account(s).
3. Provide the New Institution with a completed change of address form.
4. Write to the New Institution at the address below and ask that your account(s) remain active. In your letter, include the type of the account(s): checking, savings, money market, etc., the name(s) on the account(s), the account number(s), and the signature of an authorized signer on the account(s), with your name and address.

3003 Tasman Dr.
Santa Clara, CA 95054

If you do not claim ownership of your Deposits at the New Institution by **September 27, 2024**, federal law requires these unclaimed deposits be transferred to the State's Unclaimed Property Division, according to your address listed with the Failed Institution. If your address is outside of the United States, the FDIC will deliver your deposits to the State in which the Failed Institution had its main office. According to the Unclaimed Deposits Amendments Act of 1993 (12 U.S.C. Section 1822(e)), **you will have ten years to claim your deposits from the State's Unclaimed Property Division according to the state's unclaimed property laws. If you do not claim your deposits from the State within the ten-year period, federal law prohibits you from claiming your deposits.**

If the State does not take custody of your Deposits, after the 18-month period, you may claim your Deposits from the FDIC until the receivership is terminated. A receivership can be terminated at any time. Once the receivership terminates, you will not be able to claim your deposits.

If you have a loan with the Failed Institution, and you would like to discuss offsetting your insured and/or uninsured Deposit(s) against the loan, visit the FDIC Claims Portal (https://resolutions.fdic.gov/claimsportal/s/), or call 972-761-2112.

TECHNOLOGY | WORKPLACE | LEGAL

Ditch the Crowd With a Private Social Space

With alternative apps and shared photo albums, you can create an exclusive club to connect online.

Tech Tip

By J. D. BIERSDORFER

Even before the recent TikTok bans and mental-health concerns from the surgeon general, public attitudes toward social media were evolving. Many people are moving to online communities on less-populated networks like Nextdoor to get away from the overload of influencers, advertisers, data-mining and political divisiveness that often dominate the larger mainstream platforms.

Facebook and other sites do offer the ability to make private groups. But if you're looking for a change, you can set up your own personal ad-free space with an exclusive membership elsewhere. Here's what you can do.

Getting Started

Before you make the leap to your own micro-social network, think about what you want it to be. Does your group mostly post photos, or are you looking for a place to share status updates, pictures, videos and links? And how will people log in — iPhones, Android phones, tablets or desktop browsers?

Next, search your app store for "private photo sharing" or "private social media" to see your options.

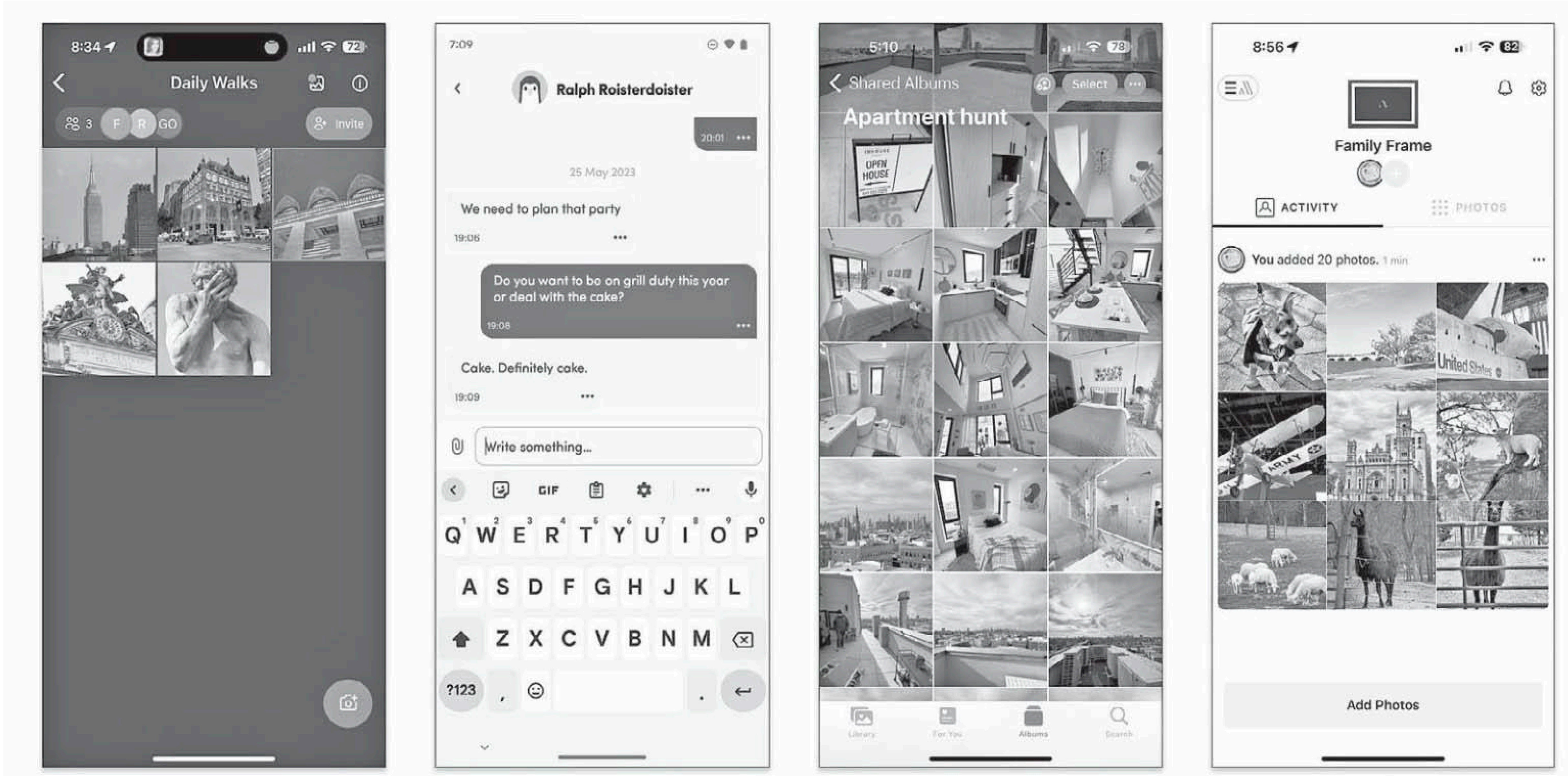
Even if your group is comfortable just sticking with familiar methods like WhatsApp groups, message apps or Reply All emails, increased social activity can be costly for those with limited data or message plans. And if the focus is on photo sharing, be sure to consider an app or service that includes adequate file storage or the option to buy more space.

Paying Your Way

Private social media apps work much like the larger platforms with the sharing of status updates, comments, photos and videos (although they may lack tools like photo filters and video effects). In some cases, you pay a small fee — but you can share without advertisements and fewer personal-information concerns.

For example, Kin requires the host of the private space to buy a subscription — but everyone else can join the group free. A Kin "space" includes a Storyline feed for members to share photos and comments, a chat function and other familiar tools. Prices start at $4 a month for a plan with 50 gigabytes of storage and an unlimited number of members.

Photocircle is another option for a more visually oriented circle of friends and family. The app has an ad-supported version, but you can lose the ads and focus on everyone's fabulous photos by upgrading to a PhotoCircle+ subscription for about $8 a year per person.



PHOTOCIRCLE; KIN; APPLE; AURA

You can privately share photos, chats and status updates with friends and family in several ways, including with apps like Photocircle and Kin, or with a shared photo album.

Phone-Free Photo Sharing

If your primary objective is to share photos with *everyone* in your family — including those who don't have a smartphone or who aren't particularly comfortable with technology — you still have options.

For example, both Google Photos and Apple's Photos app support shared photo albums, in which multiple people can add, view and comment on pictures in that album from their phones, tablets and computer browsers. Use the Shared Album setting when creating a new album, then name it and add the email addresses of the people you want to see the photos. Once they accept your invitation, they can see the photos and get alerts when new images are added.

You can similarly share browser-based photo albums with selected people on Dropbox, Flickr, Shutterfly and scores of other online-storage services you may already use.

But what if you have a family member with an extremely limited technology tolerance — but who still wants to see *every* single baby or vacation photo? An internet-connected digital picture frame may be the solution.

Wirecutter, a product review site owned by The New York Times, tested several digital picture frames and recommends the $150 Aura Carver model for its sharp 10.1-inch screen and ease of setup; the $200 Aura Mason frame was also noted for its display of photos in the vertical portrait orientation. Once you connect the frame to the internet for your recipient, you and the rest of the family can upload thousands of photos to it from the Aura smartphone app.

Big Events for Small Groups

Keeping selected people up-to-date on your major life milestones is another reason to use a private social space. For example, you can use the nonprofit CaringBridge platform to create a free, secure, ad-free site to share serious health news with friends and family.

New parents are perhaps the biggest generators of photos with the need for privacy. And there are plenty of apps for that, including FamilyAlbum, (free or a $5 monthly premium version for features like longer videos), Honeycomb (free) and Sproutly (free; iPhone only).

No matter which app or service you use, read the company's privacy policy carefully and make sure you have your security locked to the world outside your chosen group. Even if you decide to also stay with your older social media platforms, review your privacy and security controls there, too. Wirecutter also has guides for the major social media and messaging apps.

Employees at Amazon Found a Common Cause Over Remote Work Policy

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE

This tension follows a pandemic that exacerbated the divide between white-collar workers who could do their jobs from the safety of their homes and workers who often could not and were exposed to higher Covid risks.

Simultaneously, workers in both the corporate and noncorporate realms have re-evaluated their working conditions, quit their jobs in waves and called for higher wages, amid a tight labor market at one point called a "workers economy." The unemployment rate this spring has remained low, at 3.4 percent, with wages rising.

At Amazon, more than 1,000 people walked off the job on Wednesday, for one hour during lunchtime, according to organizers. They were protesting the company's return-to-office rule, among other issues including layoffs and the company's impact on the climate. Weeks earlier, employees voiced their frustrations with the R.T.O. policy in a Remote Advocacy channel, with over 30,000 members, on the Slack workplace messaging system.

The company, which estimated that 300 people had participated in the walkout, has more than 350,000 corporate and tech employees globally. More than 900 in Seattle and 2,000 globally pledged to walk out. Some employees, particularly working parents, pin some of their frustration to the financial toll of returning to the office, especially the cost and pressures of child care.

The vast majority of Amazon's more than one million workers, including those who formed a union at a Staten Island warehouse, have been working in person throughout the pandemic.

Apple, where employees issued open letters protesting in-person work, and the Gap have encountered a similar dynamic. At Starbucks, more than 70 named employees, along with others who remained anonymous, released a petition this year urging the company to permit them to keep working remotely. Members of the union representing Starbucks baristas have been supportive of these corporate workers, even though most of the company's roughly 250,000 U.S. employees, including those across more than 300 unionized stores, cannot work from home.



GRANT HINDSLEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Amazon headquarters in Seattle. Corporate employees at Amazon organized a walkout on Wednesday to protest the company's return-to-office rule.

Indeed, many workers in warehouses and stores have been quick to show support for their corporate colleagues, noting that they have nothing to gain from seeing office workers lose out on the flexibility that the pandemic proved was possible.

"The work that we're doing is in two separate fields," said Anna Ortega, 23, who is active in Inland Empire Amazon Workers United, a group of warehouse workers, and has been working at an Amazon facility in San Bernardino, Calif., for almost two years. "It's just showing us that Amazon has a problem with workers and listening to us."

Ms. Ortega spends her days lifting 50-pound packages — a task she could never do from home. But she said she supported the Amazon workers who were asking for the flexibility to keep working remotely.

"If your employees are happy and are able to work productively from home, I think they would be able to bring better results," Ms. Ortega said.

An Amazon spokesman, Brad Glasser, said that the company respected "employees' rights to express their opinions and peacefully assemble," but that it had noticed "more energy, collaboration, and connections" since employees returned to the office.

At Starbucks, members of the union representing store workers have corresponded with corporate employees on Discord and other platforms, offering their support. And when corporate employees released their petition, they asked the company both to reverse its return-to-office policy and to allow free and fair union elections across stores.

Jake Sklarew, 34, a software engineer at Starbucks who signed the petition, was frustrated by the return-to-office policy because during the pandemic he had bought a home in an affordable area, 30 miles from the office, thinking he'd be able to keep working remotely. Earlier in his career, when he worked in restaurants, he commuted as much as three hours a day, and he sees his current calls for fairer company policies as connected to the struggles of baristas demanding workplace respect.

"The people that are working in stores, when you talk to them, they're not asking for other people to have to work in person," he said, adding that it wouldn't make sense for Starbucks to end remote work for some just because not everyone can do it. "It feels to me like kind of an eye-for-an-eye situation: You're not helping anyone — you're just hurting everyone."

Starbucks has suggested that its policy, which requires its 3,750 corporate workers to come in three days a week, contains an element of equity for its employees, or "partners," because many "didn't have the privilege of working remotely." But some union members have rejected this logic.

To Sarah Pappin, 32, a Starbucks shift supervisor in Seattle, what corporate employees are asking for is directly related to what store employees are demanding, such as increased Covid safety protections.

"Even jobs that you might think of as dream jobs can be exploited," she said. "I think there is a growing understanding that we're all workers."

But that sense of solidarity doesn't erase the guilt that some office workers feel as they ask to hold on to the freedom of a workday in their living room. Many office workers have realized, too, all the advantages they have even in their organizing efforts.

"We're so much closer to leadership," Mr. Lerma said. "I have access to a work-issued laptop that has provided me with the complete address book of everyone within Amazon. I have access to Slack, which can give me any contact I want. A warehouse employee doesn't have that luxury."

Amazon Agrees to Pay $25 Million to Settle Charges It Violated the Online Privacy of Children

By NATASHA SINGER

Amazon agreed on Wednesday to pay a civil penalty of $25 million to settle federal charges that it kept sensitive information collected from children for years, including their precise locations and voice recordings, in violation of a children's online privacy law.

It was the latest legal action in an intensifying regulatory effort to require some of the world's largest tech platforms to better safeguard their younger users.

The case, brought by the Federal Trade Commission and the Justice Department, centers on Amazon's handling of the personal details it collected from children who conversed with Alexa, the company's voice-activated virtual assistant.

In a legal complaint filed in U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington, regulators said the tech giant had kept young people's Alexa voice recordings indefinitely and used the data for business purposes like training its algorithm to understand children, violating the federal Children's Online Privacy Protection Act.

That law, known as COPPA, requires online services aimed at people younger than 13 to obtain parental consent before collecting a child's personal details and to allow parents to have their children's data deleted. But even after parents sought to delete their children's voice recordings, Amazon failed to delete transcripts of the children's conversations with Alexa from all its databases, regulators said.

"Amazon's history of misleading parents, keeping children's recordings indefinitely, and flouting parents' deletion requests violated" the children's online privacy law and "sacrificed privacy for profits," Samuel Levine, director of the F.T.C.'s Bureau of Consumer Protection, said in a statement. "COPPA does not allow companies to keep children's data forever for any reason, and certainly not to train their algorithms."

The complaint also charged Amazon with deceiving consumers, including parents, by repeatedly assuring users they could delete data, like their Alexa voice recordings, yet failing to adequately honor users' deletion requests.

Though it agreed to settle the charges, Amazon said it disagreed with the F.T.C.'s claims and denied violating the children's law.

"We built Alexa with strong privacy protections and customer controls," the company said in a statement. The statement added that the company had designed Amazon Kids, a service that enables parents to manage games, books and other content for their children, to comply with the children's online privacy law, and that Amazon had worked with the F.T.C. before expanding the children's content service to include Alexa.

Under the terms of the proposed settlement agreement, Amazon would be required to delete children's voice recordings and precise location data as well as inactive Alexa accounts belonging to children. The proposed agreement also prohibits Amazon from misrepresenting how it handles users' voice recordings, precise location data and children's data.

A federal court must approve the settlement order.

The Amazon case comes at a moment of heightened public concern over how some prominent social networks, video game services and device makers treat their younger users. It highlights intensifying efforts by the Federal Trade Commission to force large tech platforms to bolster protections for sensitive information, like precise location or personal health details, whose disclosure could pose privacy or physical risks to adult consumers and children.

> ***The F.T.C. said that Alexa voice recordings were kept "forever."***

Last December, Epic Games, the maker of Fortnite, agreed to pay $520 million to settle accusations by the F.T.C. that it had illegally harvested data from players under 13 and, separately, steered millions of users to make unwanted payments. In 2019, Google agreed to pay a $170 million penalty to settle charges from the F.T.C. and the attorney general of New York that it had violated children's privacy on YouTube.

The intensifying regulatory push to protect children online is not limited to the United States. Last September, Irish regulators announced they would impose a fine of about $400 million against Meta for its handling of children's information on Instagram. Meta said it disagreed and planned to appeal.

In a separate case on Wednesday, the F.T.C. accused Ring, the home security camera service, of committing "egregious violations" of users' privacy, saying that privacy and security failures at the company had enabled employees to illegally snoop on customers and allowed hackers to hijack users' accounts.

Regulators said that Ring, which Amazon acquired in 2018, had "unreasonable" data security and privacy practices from at least 2016 through January 2020.

In 2017, for instance, one Ring employee viewed thousands of videos belonging to dozens of female customers, including in sensitive locations like the women's bedrooms and bathrooms, the agency said in a legal complaint filed in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

The proposed settlement order would require Amazon to pay $5.8 million in consumer refunds, institute stringent security measures and delete algorithms or other data products derived from the illegal viewing of consumers' videos.

In a statement, Amazon said Ring had addressed the security and privacy issues before the F.T.C. had begun its inquiry.

India Is Scrapping Its Largest Bill in September. The Race Is On to Spend It.

By SAMEER YASIR and MIKE IVES

NEW DELHI — Indians have been filing into gas stations, jewelry stores, fruit stands and any other businesses that still accept soon-to-be-withdrawn 2,000-rupee notes, each worth about $24.

The race to spend India's biggest bill has been on since its central bank announced last month that they would be removed from circulation by early fall.

India's vast economy remains heavily reliant on cash, and many businesses have welcomed the surge in traffic, even if it has left them a bit short of change. Economists say retiring the big bill may help fight corruption, bring workers into the formal economy, improve tax collection and accelerate India's push for digital payments.

But for some consumers, the move has dredged up unpleasant memories of 2016, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi's sudden ban on large notes left them without enough cash for basic transactions. In an economy that is driven by rural and informal workers, some do not own bank accounts — or trust the government's economic policies.

"It is better to buy gold or silver and keep it," said Meenu Kevat, 32, a cleaner in New Delhi who does not have a bank account and hoards her cash earnings in a tin box. After the recent ban was announced, she said, it took her four days to cajole shopkeepers into converting 12 of her 2,000-rupee notes into smaller dominations.

"I don't trust cash now the government can do anything it wants," Ms. Kevat said, standing outside a grocery store in south Delhi. "It can cancel a note anytime, no matter how small or big."

The fine print

In 2016, Mr. Modi's government announced without warning that it was withdrawing India's two largest denominations at the time — the 500- and 1,000-rupee bills — to expose and penalize people who held huge amounts of money that could not be accounted for.

After that sudden demonetization, A.T.M.s were overrun, and some retail businesses came to a standstill because customers were hoarding the little cash they had. And because the withdrawn notes amounted to about 86 percent of the cash in circulation at the time, the government decided to introduce the 2,000-rupee bill as a "remonetization" measure to ease the currency crunch.

So far, the move to withdraw the 2,000-rupee bills from circulation is causing far less disruption. That may be because they account for less than 11 percent of the currency in circulation. India's 1.4 billion citizens also have until Sept. 30 to either spend the bills or exchange them at banks. (The bills will remain legal tender after that, but many Indians are taking the deadline seriously, because they worry that government policy could change.)

In the long term, removing the 2,000-rupee bills will probably help with a gradual, positive move toward formalization and transparency, said Phyllis Papadavid, an economist who studied the 2016 demonetization program. More workers should be able to formally register and claim benefits, for example, and there will be higher barriers to tax evasion.

"I can't think of any aspect of an economy that is worse off by digitalization or formalization, because, basically, you have better usage and management of information, and accountability," said Ms. Papadavid, the director of research and advisory at Asia House, a research outfit in London. In the short term, though, the cash rush has caused a few headaches.



SANCHIT KHANNA/HINDUSTAN TIMES, VIA GETTY IMAGES

At a bank in New Delhi last week, customers exchanged 2,000-rupee notes that will soon be taken out of circulation.

Shortchanged

Indian news media outlets have reported on a nationwide surge of foot traffic in recent days at businesses that are willing to accept 2,000-rupee bills.

"People have a habit of either keeping cash in big denominations or gold at home," said Vicky Bansal, a jeweler who said his shop in New Delhi had been especially busy since the announcement. "So if they can't keep 2,000-rupee notes, they'll keep jewelry."

At gas stations across India, nearly 90 percent of purchases have been made in 2,000-rupee notes since the announcement, up from the normal level of 10 percent, Ajay Bansal, the president of the All India Petroleum Dealers Association, said in a statement. Because many customers try to use the bills to buy as little as 100 or 200 rupees worth of gas, he added, "outlets are extremely short of change across the country."

At a fruit stand in south Delhi, the proprietor, Rizwan Ahmad, said that he had stopped accepting 2,000-rupee bills for the same reason.

"It took me three days to pay back the change I'd borrowed from a tea seller, a barber and a pharmacist," Mr. Ahmad, 33, said outside his fruit stall in a crowded bazaar. Now he has about $400 worth of 2,000-rupee notes that he will need to unload before the September deadline.

Damaged trust

Mr. Modi's government has characterized its withdrawal of 2,000-rupee bills as a logical step in economic policy. The bills "were hardly used, so economic activity will not be impacted," Shaktikanta Das, the governor of India's reserve bank, said last month.

But some critics have called the policy ham-handed, saying that it has shaken consumer confidence and damaged the rupee's integrity. A few have also noted that while the 2016 campaign helped the government claw back nearly all of the withdrawn bills, it did not eliminate unaccounted-for cash, known as black money, from the economy.

The policy has even been criticized by people in other South Asian countries where businesses accept Indian rupees. In Bhutan, for example, 2,000-rupee notes are now "as good as worthless" because they cannot be exchanged, Tenzing Lamsang, a prominent newspaper editor there, wrote on Twitter last week.

India has talked about making the rupee a global reserve currency, he added. "However, if your own neighborhood cannot trust your currency and the erratic demonetizations, then good luck getting the world to accept it," he wrote.

In New Delhi recently, Shanker Sharma, a gas station manager, expressed a similar sentiment. "People no longer trust the government when it comes to cash," he said.

To cope with an influx of 2,000-rupee notes, he has posted signs warning customers not to fill their tanks with 50 rupees, or about 60 cents, worth of gas and expect to receive change. When some do anyway, he said, "I have to shoo them away."

Sameer Yasir reported from New Delhi, and Mike Ives from Seoul.

Walmart Raises Pay for Some Druggists and Opticians

By JORDYN HOLMAN

BENTONVILLE, ARK. — Walmart, the nation's largest private employer, said on Wednesday that it was increasing the wages for 7,700 of its pharmacists and opticians, as it expands its health business and seeks to retain the workers in a competitive environment.

The retailer said the raise would push the average annual salary of the more than 3,700 pharmacists affected to more than $140,000. Walmart declined to share the current salary rate, saying it was based on location and role.

It said the opticians could now "expect" to make an average hourly wage of more than $22.50. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the mean annual wage for a pharmacist in the United States is $129,410 and the mean hourly wage for opticians is $21.58.

Walmart employs 16,000 pharmacists and 12,000 opticians overall.

The company also said it was starting a program in which associates who worked in its Vision Center could receive certification and licensing as a way to move into higher-paying positions.

"We've listened to our associates and taken their feedback about how their work environment needs to improve," Brian Setzer, Walmart's executive vice president of health and wellness, said on Wednesday at the retailer's annual shareholder meeting.

Why It Matters

This year, Walmart raised wages for workers across its business as a way to compete for talent. Inflation is affecting not only its shoppers, but also its employees. And the job market continues to be robust, giving workers more options. In January, Walmart reduced its pharmacy hours as it grappled with a tight labor market.

That same month, the company said it was increasing its minimum wage for store workers to a range of $14 to $19 an hour, up from $12 to $18. Its average wage is still not as high as some competitors, like Costco.

Last year, it also raised wages for pharmacy technicians working for Walmart and Sam's Club to an average of over $20 an hour and promised more frequent raises.

For years, Walmart faced pressure from unions, policymakers and activists to increase its pay for store worker. Because of its scale, Walmart's recent move to boost pay could signal to the rest of the retail industry that companies still need to provide more incentives for workers to stay competitive in the labor market.



JOHN GRESS/REUTERS

Walmart's first health center opened in 2019. It plans to have more than 75 across the country next year.

Background

Walmart opened its first health center in 2019. By providing health care services, the retailer is seeking to gain a deeper foothold in the communities where it operates and grab a bigger share of the billions of dollars Americans spend on medical care each year.

It currently has 32 health centers in the United States, with plans to have more than 75 by the end of next year.

"Strong growth" in its health and wellness category helped drive an increase in the company's comparable sales for its most recent quarter, John David Rainey, Walmart's chief financial officer, said last month.

At the same time, there is a shortage of pharmacists across the country. After three years at the front line of helping to battle the coronavirus, a significant number of pharmacy workers burned out and left the industry. In the coming years, the industry is expected to expand more slowly than the national average for other industries, according to a 2021 job outlook report by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The report said most of the openings would "result from the need to replace workers who transfer to different occupations or exit the labor force."

What's Next

This week, Walmart's executives, store associates and suppliers are gathered in Bentonville, Ark., for the retailer's annual shareholder meeting.

The company is expected to explain its vision for the year ahead, giving updates about its consumer base, technological innovations and store remodels. Its health business will most likely be a topic of interest for investors and analysts.

Adidas Sheds Yeezy Gear To Aid Anti-Hate Groups

By MELISSA EDDY

BERLIN — Adidas is going to start selling the first pairs of its leftover Yeezy sneakers, a step toward resolving a $1.3 billion inventory headache that has plagued the sportswear company since it severed ties with Kanye West, the rapper known as Ye, over a string of anti-Semitic remarks by the musician.

Adidas said a "significant amount" of the proceeds would go to groups and organizations representing people who had been hurt by Ye's remarks. The company had consulted with several of them in discussions leading up to the plan, Bjorn Gulden, the company's chief executive, said in a statement.

This solution "respects the created designs and produced shoes; it works for our people, resolves an inventory problem and will have a positive impact in our communities," said Mr. Gulden, who took the helm of Adidas in January. "There is no place in sport or society for hate of any kind and we remain committed to fighting against it."

Why It Matters

The postings on Adidas's website of Yeezy Boost 350 V2 sneakers, in black and two-toned red and gray, selling for 200 euros a pair, or about $213, generated buzz over social media, reflecting the enduring popularity of the brand. The shoes go on sale Thursday.

Adidas said its decision to sever ties with Ye cost the company €1.2 billion in lost sales and about €500 million in profit this year.

Options for eliminating the inventory ranged from burning it to donating it to the needy. Mr. Gulden called figuring out what to do with the remaining stock "one of the most difficult decisions that I have been a part of."

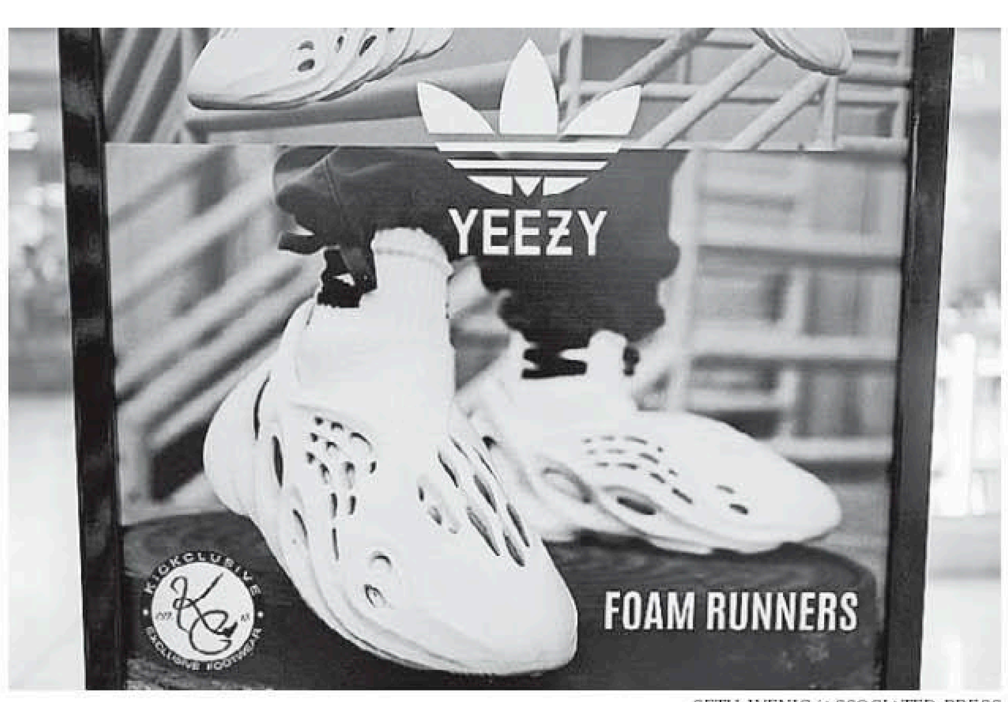
But Yeezy shoes have been known to sell for up to $1,000 a pair and remain popular despite their association with Ye. So the company said it had made the decision in consultation with groups including Black Lives Matter and the Philonise & Keeta Floyd Institute for Social Change, which is run by Philonise Floyd, the brother of George Floyd.

Jonathan A. Greenblatt, chief executive of the Anti-Defamation League, which is among the groups that will benefit from the proceeds of the sale, welcomed Adidas's decision as one fitting the complexity of the problem.

"This is a thoughtful and caring resolution for the unsold merchandise," Mr. Greenblatt said.

But other groups noted that despite Adidas's pledge to donate the proceeds, Ye would still make money off the sales. Adidas has declined to comment on how much that would be, but Mr. Gulden previously said Ye still had a royalty contract that Adidas was obligated to honor.

"Adidas's willingness to donate the proceeds is highly commendable," said Josef Schuster, president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, but he added, "The fact that Kanye West would profit financially from the sale is highly problematic."



SETH WENIG/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Yeezy shoes at a resale store. Adidas is unloading $1.3 billion in inventory.

Background

The Yeezy brand became a defining force in the sportswear industry and an incredibly lucrative cornerstone for Adidas. The partnership between the rapper and the company, based in Germany, was hailed as the most successful sportswear collaboration since Michael Jordan teamed up with Nike.

But last fall, Ye's erratic behavior and comments targeting Blacks, Jews and others caused an uproar. Adidas came under pressure for failing to react, after other brands severed ties with the artist.

What's Next

Besides the two styles posted for sale, the website shows images of a dozen other models, suggesting that more could be announced in the coming weeks.

Adidas said it was considering further releases of the Yeezy inventory, but it did not give a timeline. Customers were asked to download an app and register for updates.

U.S. Will Require New Cars To Have Automatic Brakes

By NEAL E. BOUDETTE

The top federal auto safety regulator on Wednesday proposed requiring all new cars and trucks to have automatic braking systems that can prevent collisions, after traffic fatalities have soared in recent years.

The plan, from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, would require car companies to expand the use of more advanced systems than those commonly in use now. The agency is proposing that all light vehicles, including cars, large pickup trucks and sport utility vehicles, be equipped to automatically stop and avoid hitting pedestrians at speeds of up to 37 miles per hour.

Vehicles would also have to brake and stop to avoid hitting stopped or slow-moving vehicles at speeds of up to 62 m.p.h. And the systems would have to perform well at night.

"We hope this will avoid many crashes," Polly Trottenberg, a deputy transportation secretary, said at a news conference. "We know this is going to save lives."

About 90 percent of the new vehicles on sale now have some form of automatic emergency braking, but not all meet the standards the safety agency is proposing.

Ms. Trottenberg acknowledged that the rule would impose costs on automakers, which have often resisted new regulations. "I know we're throwing a challenge out here, but we also know this technology is pretty well developed," she said. "This is the time to take things to the next level."

Auto safety experts have pointed to several factors in the rise in traffic deaths, including the larger size and heavier weight of cars and trucks and greater distraction because drivers and pedestrians are increasingly using electronic devices. In some places, roads have been designed and lighted to keep traffic moving rather than to protect pedestrians and cyclists.

Jonathan Adkins, chief executive of the Governors Highway Safety Association, welcomed the proposal. "We certainly want to see it implemented as soon as possible," he said.

The technology could help reduce fatal accidents.

Traffic fatalities are one of the most persistent causes of death in the United States, and they are increasing despite advances such as warning and crash avoidance systems, and increasing airbag use. Nearly 43,000 people died in auto crashes in 2022. That was down slightly from 2021, but 31 percent higher than in 2014.

Traffic deaths had been declining until about a decade ago, when they began rising rapidly. The rise has been driven by a spike in pedestrian deaths. An estimated 3,500 pedestrians were killed in the first half of 2022, the most recent period for which data is available. That is the highest number in 40 years.

The toll goes beyond fatalities. In 2019, the economic cost of auto crashes totaled $340 billion, according to the safety agency. In that year, 36,500 people died in auto accidents, 4.5 million were injured and 23 million vehicles were damaged.

Government officials said the automatic-braking proposal could save at least 360 lives a year and reduce injuries by about 24,000 a year. Even when automatic braking doesn't prevent crashes, it can make accidents less severe by slowing down cars.

Braking systems use radar or cameras to anticipate accidents.

Automatic emergency braking systems typically use cameras, radar or both to spot vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and other obstacles. By comparing a vehicle's speed and direction with those of other vehicles or people, these systems can determine that a collision is imminent, alert the driver through an alarm and activate the brakes if the driver fails to do so.

The first such systems were introduced in 2011. Five years later, automakers voluntarily agreed to make automatic emergency braking technology standard in all new cars and trucks by 2022. The agency said its proposed rule would impose higher standards than the technology that automakers had agreed to use.

In a statement, the Alliance for Automotive Innovation, the industry's main lobbying group, did not endorse or oppose the proposed rule, calling automatic braking a "breakthrough technology" that automakers "have already deployed."

Automatic braking is one component of advanced driver-assistance systems that are found in some new cars. These systems are capable of steering without human intervention and, in some cases, changing lanes and allowing drivers to take their hands off the wheel on highways. These systems include Tesla's Autopilot, Super Cruise by General Motors and BlueCruise from Ford Motor.

It could take a few years before the rules go into effect.

The safety agency will take comments on the rule from automakers, safety groups and the public before making it final — a process that can take a year or more. The rule will go into effect three years after it is adopted.

On Tuesday, President Biden withdrew the nomination of Ann E. Carlson to lead the agency. Some Republican senators had opposed her appointment because of her past work on environmental policy. Previously a law professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, Ms. Carlson has been the agency's acting administrator since September.

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Sports
The New York Times

PRO BASKETBALL



ALLEN BEREZOVSKY/GETTY IMAGES

LEBRON JAMES IN 'UMMMF' Denver's Nikola Jokic is a big, strong man, and it took only the slightest contact to send the Lakers' James, who is pretty big and strong himself, hurtling through the air.

For Best Playoff Performance, the Floppy Goes To ...

KURT STREETER

SPORTS OF THE TIMES

In the 2023 N.B.A. playoffs, LeBron James got in on the act. And Stephen Curry, and the league's most valuable player, Joel Embiid. Kyle Lowry keeps trying, but, oh, does he need help. Even Nikola Jokic has taken a bow.

Yes, this postseason has showcased the beauty of basketball. The upstarts, upsets and dominance. The Miami Heat putting the kibosh on the comeback of comebacks in the Eastern Conference finals. But it has also been marred by players of all stripes — ahem, Malik Monk, the sixth man for the Sacramento Kings — falling and flailing as if stung by a cattle prod.

All in desperate attempts to hoodwink referees into calling fouls.

Welcome to the National Basketball Floppers Association.

Flopping isn't new, of course. In the 1970s, Red Auerbach, the Boston Celtics's fabled and curmudgeonly leader, railed on national television against the "Hollywood acting" that was sullying the game.

"N.B.A. floppers are almost always overacting," said Anthony Gilardi, a Hollywood acting coach. "You watch these guys with their pratfalls and their on-court stunts, and it's so over-the-top cringeworthy as to be hilarious."

I asked Gilardi to watch video clips of sham playoff tumbles and offer an assessment. He had seen most of the plays and knew the subject well. He's a Celtics fan who has seen all of Marcus Smart's greatest flops.

There's a vast difference, Gilardi said, between players reacting to contact in a way that creates an illusion that a foul has occurred and being so obvious that every fan in the arena can tell the reaction is fake. It is the difference between what we see from an Oscar nominee and an actor on a run-of-the-mill soap opera.

"In soap operas, it's often the case you can absolutely tell they are *acting*," he said, emphasizing the word the way Heat guard Max Strus would a shoulder bump. "There's not enough subtlety to create the illusion."

Gilardi offered a few suggestions for ways hardwood entertainers could refine their technique.

- Go deeply into the part. Milk it for all it's worth, even if that means limping after the foul has been called.
- If you're going to fake an injury, for God's sake, get the specific body part right: No more holding your arm as if it were run over by a tank when you've been bumped in the chest.
- Relax and focus. The art is in the subtlety, not in the effort of trying to convince.

Do all of these, and the deception won't be so evident as to embarrass officials or raise howls from fans, cackling criticism from television analysts or a clampdown by the suits in the league office.

"If they worked on this the right way," Gilardi said, "there's a world where some of these flops would be so good, they might not even be considered flops. Now *that* is good acting."

After seeing the N.B.A. try, and fail, to stop flopping for over a decade, today's players can't seem to help themselves. I don't have a number to back this up, but the eye test tells you all you need to know. Flopping pervades the playoffs like tumbleweeds on a dusty desert plain.



PHELAN M. EBENHACK/ASSOCIATED PRESS

KYLE LOWRY IN 'YEEE-OW' The Miami guard honed his craft in the regular season guarding Orlando's Jalen Suggs.

'You watch these guys with their pratfalls and their on-court stunts, and it's so over-the-top cringeworthy as to be hilarious.'

ANTHONY GILARDI, acting coach



MATT YORK/ASSOCIATED PRESS

DEVIN BOOKER IN 'SPLASH' The Phoenix guard working on his hard sell.

Google "Mat Ishbia Playoffs Ridiculous Flop" and you'll see even the billionaire owner of the Phoenix Suns take a courtside dive.

Bearing witness to the Warriors' flop-heavy loss to the Los Angeles Lakers in the Western Conference semifinals, Golden State Coach Steve Kerr made a personal plea to end the "gamesmanship" and canny ploys "to fool the refs."

His solution: Have N.B.A. referees call technical fouls against floppers, as officials do in the international game. The league is now reportedly considering a test run at enforcement during summer exhibitions.

I say, not so fast.

N.B.A. referees have a hard enough time deciding whether James Harden is carrying the ball 10 steps on his way to a layup is worth calling a travel. Now they would have the added burden of deciding, in real time, whether a foul was tried-and-true or hardwood chicanery. Odds of success? Slim.

And remember: 11 years ago, the league announced a plan to fine players for flops. Handing down $5,000 fines to obsessively ambitious, multimillionaire athletes who would walk on shards of glass to win a championship didn't quite do the trick.

The flop, part acting and part competition, is now baked into the N.B.A. It shows off athleticism and skill, a deep thirst for winning as well as showmanship — attributes that define the league. It's all part of the spectacle.

So why not have some fun with it? Maybe, instead of resisting and demonizing the flop, we should embrace it — but demand better acting.

Take, for instance, the back-to-back theatrics delivered by Jokic and James late in Game 2 of the Western Conference finals. James's performance was a thing to behold.

After Jokic brushed against him — yes, brushed — while attempting a pass, James broke out the vaudeville. His face contorted into a grimace. He twisted his 6-foot-9, 250-pound body, backpedaled, leaped backward and slid halfway across the width of the court until he landed at the feet of courtside spectators, spilling the drink of one who even offered James a towel. He offered a syrupy thank you in response.

What a charade!

But the flop worked. A foul was called on Jokic and the ball awarded to the Lakers. James leaped up, alert, energetic and showing not an ounce of injury. In a flash, he took an inbounds pass and dribbled upcourt.

Jokic and the Denver Nuggets still won that game, and swept that series. With the dominant way Jokic has been playing to get his team to the franchise's first N.B.A. finals, the concept of stopping him seems like pure theater.

BASEBALL

Cable Group Relinquishes Padre Games To the League

By BENJAMIN HOFFMAN

In a move that could signify a new era in how games are distributed, Major League Baseball is taking over production and distribution of all San Diego Padres games, starting Wednesday night against the Miami Marlins.

The move, which was announced late Tuesday night, was made after Diamond Sports Group, a subsidiary of the Sinclair Broadcast Group that operates under the name Bally Sports, failed to make a payment before the team's grace period ended on Tuesday.

"While we're disappointed that Diamond Sports Group failed to live up to their contractual agreement with the club, we are taking this opportunity to reimagine the distribution model," Noah Garden, M.L.B.'s chief revenue officer, said in a statement.

Garden said M.L.B. would remove blackouts of local games and expand the reach of Padres games by more than two million homes. The games will be available free through MLB.com, Padres.com and M.L.B.'s streaming app through Sunday and then will be available to in-market fans for $19.99 a month, a discount from the full price of M.L.B.'s streaming services. The games will also be distributed on television through cable services like Spectrum, Cox and DirecTV.

According to the new arrangement under M.L.B., the team's primary TV broadcasters, Don Orsillo, Mark Grant and Bob Scanlan, will continue in their roles, as

A potential first step toward a new broadcast model.

will the team's radio broadcast crew of Jesse Agler and Tony Gwynn Jr.

M.L.B. had been preparing for this to happen, as regional sports networks across sports have struggled in recent years and Diamond Sports Group, which controls the broadcast rights of 14 teams, declared bankruptcy in March.

At a meeting in April at M.L.B.'s offices in Manhattan, Commissioner Rob Manfred discussed the league's desire to have Diamond meet its financial commitments, but also made it clear that the league was ready to move on without it. In declaring the league "ready to go," he said they had prepared "down to details like what's the graphics package going to look like on the broadcast."

Part of that was hiring Billy Chambers, a former Fox Sports executive, as executive vice president for local media, a new position. In M.L.B.'s statement about the takeover of Padres broadcasts, Chambers said the league would be able to improve picture quality on the broadcasts and offer better access during games.

"Usually when you have a crisis, there's also sort of an opportunity attached to it," Manfred said in April. "The opportunity that I see in the Diamond crisis is the opportunity to rework the media model."

Manfred said, however, that he believed cable broadcasts would continue to exist in some form outside of streaming because "the Rob Manfreds of the world will go into their coffin gripping their cable remote control."

"I know where everything is. And you know what, I kind of like that," he said.

It is unclear whether the Padres are the first domino in a series of league takeovers, but the situation may play out fairly quickly. Diamond has missed payments and not honored its full commitments to four other teams besides the Padres — Cincinnati, Texas, Arizona and Cleveland — and has asked a bankruptcy judge to reduce the fees it owes teams to reflect a changing market, with a decision potentially coming Wednesday or Thursday.

In a statement about the missed payment and the termination of rights, Diamond claimed the company had the cash to honor its commitments but chose not to make the payment to San Diego because "the economics of the Padres' contract were not aligned with market realities."

Diamond's statement said M.L.B. had refused the group's offer to renegotiate the direct-to-consumer rights for all of the teams in its portfolio, but said the group intended to keep broadcasting games for other teams under contract.

TENNIS | FRENCH OPEN

Djokovic Inserts Himself Into Another Fiery Controversy

By MATTHEW FUTTERMAN

PARIS — After everything that Novak Djokovic had put himself through over the past few years, the French Open began with the possibility, finally, of a Grand Slam tournament free of drama.

But three days into the Open, Djokovic has put himself at the center of the mounting international crisis in the Balkans, where ethnic Serbians and Albanians have clashed in recent days in the conflict over Kosovo.

The message that the Serbian tennis star scrawled Monday night on a plexiglass plate overlaid on a television camera lens — "Kosovo is at the heart of Serbia" — has sports officials calling for him to be disciplined, muzzled or both, and Albanian loyalists calling him a fascist.

"A drama-free Grand Slam, I don't think it will happen for me," Djokovic said after he beat Marton Fucsovics of Hungary on Wednesday night. "I guess that drives me, as well."

The 22-time Grand Slam tournament champion struggled to find his timing early on, with the wind gusting as day turned to night. But as the light faded, the wind did too, and Djokovic cruised, finishing off the steady Fucsovics, 7-6 (2), 6-0, 6-3, in two hours and 44 minutes. But as it is so often with Djokovic, what is happening on the tennis court this week is only a fraction of the story.

The World Health Organization recently declared an end to the Covid-19 health emergency and the United States ended its requirement for foreign travelers to be vaccinated against the coronavirus, ending discussion of Djokovic's decision not to receive the vaccination. He was forced to skip some of the most important tournaments in tennis over the past two years, and last year was detained and deported from Australia ahead of the Open.

He didn't even have to worry about his main nemesis, with Rafael Nadal missing the French Open because of an injury. Djokovic continues his usual march toward the second week of the tournament — though the top-seeded Carlos Alcaraz may pose trouble.

After Djokovic's first-round match on Monday, like every winning player on the stadium courts at major tennis tournaments, he grabbed a marker for the traditional signing of the courtside television camera.

The practice, which began in the 2000s as a way for players to connect with fans, gives them an opportunity to send an international television audience a typically cheerful message like "Vamos!" (Spanish for "Let's go!"), wish a loved one "happy birthday" or write their child's name.

Occasionally the scrawl expresses a political opinion. In the days before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Russian player Andrey Rublev wrote "No War Please" on the lens plate.

Writing in his native language and drawing a heart, Djokovic's message followed a weekend of violent clashes between Serbian protesters and NATO forces who have been trying to maintain a tense peace in the region for 15 years.

Roughly an hour later, during the Serbian portion of his postmatch news conference, Djokovic, whose past political statements have been suffused with Serbian nationalism, doubled down.

"I am against wars, violence and any kind of conflict, as I've always stated publicly," Djokovic said, according to the widely circulated translations. "I empathize with all people, but the situation with Kosovo is a precedent in international law." He called Kosovo, "our hearthstone, our stronghold," and said, "Our most important monasteries are there."

Almost immediately, the statements sparked the expected reactions at the polarized ends of the conflict: hero worship from Serbians, and outrage from the ethnic Albanians who account for the overwhelming majority of the population in Kosovo but are vastly outnumbered in a handful of villages and small cities. The groups, Orthodox Christians on one side, Muslims on the other, have been fighting on an off for control in the region for hundreds of years, dating back to the Ottoman Empire.



ARMEND NIMANI/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES



CLIVE BRUNSKILL/GETTY IMAGES

Novak Djokovic said he felt a responsibility to express support for his fellow Serbs, but he drew outrage from ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, where a mural of Djokovic was defaced.

Jeta Xharra, a human-rights activist in Kosovo, said in an interview Tuesday that Djokovic's statements represented a "medieval mentality" that she compared to the thinking that led Russia to invade Ukraine last year.

"It's appalling for a man of his stature to use sports to push a fascist mentality," she said.

The Kosovan Olympic Committee has called for the International Olympic Committee and the International Tennis Federation to take disciplinary action against Djokovic.

For its part, French Open officials have opted to stay out of the conflict. There is nothing in the rule book that prohibits a player from making political statements. France's tennis federation, the F.F.T., said it was "understandable" that players would discuss international events. However, the French sports minister, Amélie Oudéa-Castéra, called Djokovic's statement "inappropriate" during a television interview, saying it was "very activist" and "very political" and that he "shouldn't get involved again."

Judging from Djokovic's recent and not-so-recent behavior, that is not an option, and he said as much during his statement after his first match.

"This is the least I could have done," he said in his native language. "I feel the responsibility as a public figure — doesn't matter in which field — to give support."

For Djokovic the statements have had increased impact because with the war in Ukraine garnering so much attention, few outside of the Balkans were aware of just how heightened the tensions in Kosovo have become during the past week — as heightened as they have been since Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008.

An international military force has tried to maintain peace in the region for decades. More than 100 countries have recognized Kosovo. Serbia and Russia have not. Ethnic Serbs who live in Kosovo boycotted local elections in April in the northern part of the country where Serbs hold majorities. That allowed Albanian candidates to win control, in their view.

The five countries that control the peacekeeping force in the region — the U.S., France, Italy, Germany and Britain — asked Kosovo's ethnic Albanian leadership not to send in security forces to take control of municipal buildings following the elections. It did anyway. The Serbs protested the takeover, sparking the clashes that wounded 30 members of the NATO peacekeeping force, known as KFOR (Kay-phor).

President Aleksandar Vucic of Serbia claimed that 52 Serbs were injured in the clashes, three seriously. He put the Serbian Army on high alert and sent his troops to the border.

Watching events unfold from Paris, Djokovic searched for a way to express two emotions — a desire for peace and the belief that Kosovo is part of Serbia. He has often spoken of the traumatic experience of growing up in a war zone, with bombs falling not far from his home in the Balkans in the 1990s. He has said that anyone who has lived through that experience could never be in favor of war.

In 2008, when Djokovic was a young player breaking into the sport's elite ranks, he recorded a video expressing solidarity with protesters in Belgrade after Kosovo declared independence.

"Of course, I'm aware that a lot of people would disagree," he said Wednesday. "But it is what it is. It's something that I stand for."

SOCCER

Chelsea Parts Ways With Executive Who Is Accused of Bullying

By TARIQ PANJA

LONDON — Almost a year after Chelsea F.C. opened an investigation into a senior executive accused of workplace bullying so severe that several staff members said colleagues took mental health leave to escape it, the team confirmed that the executive has left the club.

The accusations against the executive, Gary Twelvetree, who was director of marketing, were outlined in a report in The New York Times last June that detailed mounting concerns about a toxic workplace culture inside the department. The Times article was based on interviews with almost a dozen Chelsea employees, who described how being humiliated and berated in front of colleagues had become commonplace in the club's marketing department.

Chelsea, one of England's richest and most decorated soccer teams, declined to comment on any aspect of its investigation but did confirm that Twelvetree no longer worked at the club. Twelvetree did not respond to telephone and text messages requesting comment.

He had not returned to the team's offices at its Stamford Bridge stadium since the allegations against him surfaced in the Times article, team employees said, but remained on the payroll for months until his exit. Several employees said the team's failure to inform them of the findings of its investigation had only created new frustration inside the club.

The pressure of working under Twelvetree's leadership led multiple employees to quit their jobs. Others took medical leaves that in some cases lasted months. Several of the employees came forward after the death in January 2022 of a former well-liked member of the department, Richard Bignell, who killed himself after being forced out at Chelsea.

While suicide is a complex issue and it is unknown if other factors played a role, Bignell's death stunned many of his former colleagues. Speaking with family members at a memorial service for him early last year, a group of them said they were convinced that Bignell, the married father of 8-year-old twin daughters, had died because of events at Chelsea. A coroner's report had seemed to concur, stating after Bignell's death that he had been "deeply troubled by anxiety, depression and despair following the loss of his job."

Months after his death, Chelsea was under new ownership, with an American-led group having acquired the club from its longtime owner, the Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich. In July, the new owners said the club would conduct an investigation into the accusations, led by outside lawyers, to get a clearer picture of how the marketing department of one of the world's most well-known sports teams had become so dysfunctional and marked by unhappiness, intimidation and fear.

"The club's new board believes strongly in a workplace environment and corporate culture that empowers its employees and ensures they feel safe, included, valued and trusted," the club said at the time. No replacement for Twelvetree was named, and in his absence the marketing operation was directed by consultants from Viral Nation, a company in which a Chelsea co-owner, Todd Boehly, is an investor.

It is unclear how many people were interviewed by investigators looking into the workplace claims, or how those people were selected. Interviews began shortly after the club issued its statement in July and lasted several months. Some former staff members told The Times that they had to reach out to the club to ask to be included as part of its process. Others were contacted directly.

One former club executive said she spoke with a lawyer last September and was allowed "the opportunity to say what I needed to say" without being steered in any particular direction.

She declined to be identified because of concerns about future employment in the soccer industry. And while she said she was pleased to learn there had been a resolution to the matter, she also noted there had been several missed opportunities by the previous management to correct the situation.

After several complaints from staff in the marketing department, for example, Chelsea's former leadership hired outside consultants to undertake a "cultural review" of workplace practices. But the review was to be led by Twelvetree, who had been the focus of many of the complaints. That decision incensed many former employees, and several who contributed to the monthslong process said it was unclear if it was ever completed.

The more recent review also dragged on for months, employees said. Beyond the departure of Twelvetree, they said little has been said about what was learned. The club declined to comment on whether the investigation had been completed or if any changes had been made as a result of its findings. Chelsea would only confirm that Twelvetree had left the club, without providing details of the terms of his exit.

His quiet departure was in stark contrast to other recent high-level moves at Chelsea, many of which were marked with a statement or news release. In the last few months alone, Chelsea has heralded the arrival of a new chief executive and a new head coach — its fourth manager since the American-led takeover last year — and a redeployment of leaders in its development and recruitment departments.

Away from the field, Chelsea had been in contact with Bignell's family over compensation. The family continues to receive bereavement counseling, according to friends, and has taken part in fund-raisers for his children.

If you are having thoughts of suicide, call or text 988 to reach the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline or go to SpeakingOfSuicide.com/resources for a list of additional resources.



ANDREW BOYERS/ACTION IMAGES VIA REUTERS

Revelations about the work environment have rocked Chelsea.

THE NEW YORK TIMES CLASSIFIED LISTINGS
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NOTICE OF ADJOURNED PUBLIC SALE OF COLLATERAL

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that, in accordance with applicable provisions of the Uniform Commercial Code, SP Office Funding, L.P. ("Secured Party") will sell all limited liability company interests ("Collateral") held by Office Tech LLC in and to Office at Southport LLC ("Pledged Entity"). The public sale, which was previously scheduled for June 2, 2023, has been rescheduled to **June 6, 2023 at 2:00 p.m. (EST)** and will be held outside the New York Supreme Court located at 60 Centre St, New York, NY, with an option to participate virtually. Remote log in credentials will be provided to registered bidders. Secured Party's understanding is that the principal asset of Office at Southport LLC is the real property located at 1101, 1103 and 1107 Lake Washington Boulevard North, Renton, WA 98056 commonly known as Southport Office Park. The Collateral will be sold to the highest qualified bidder; provided, however, that Secured Party reserves the right to cancel the sale in its entirety, or to adjourn the sale to a future date by announcement made at the time and place scheduled for the public sale. Interested parties who intend to bid on the above Collateral must contact Brock Cannon of Newmark at (212) 372-2066, *brock.cannon@nmrk.com* to receive the Terms of Public Sale and bidding instructions. Upon execution of a standard non-disclosure agreement, additional documentation and information will be made available. Interested parties who do not contact the Secured Party and qualify prior to the public sale will not be permitted to enter a bid or participate at the public sale either in person or remotely.

KIRKLAND & ELLIS LLP, Attorneys for Secured Party, Attn: Christopher L. Hartmann, P.C. 601 Lexington Ave, New York, New York 10022. Tel: (212) 446-4730, Fax: (212) 446-6460.
E-mail: christopher.hartmann@kirkland.com

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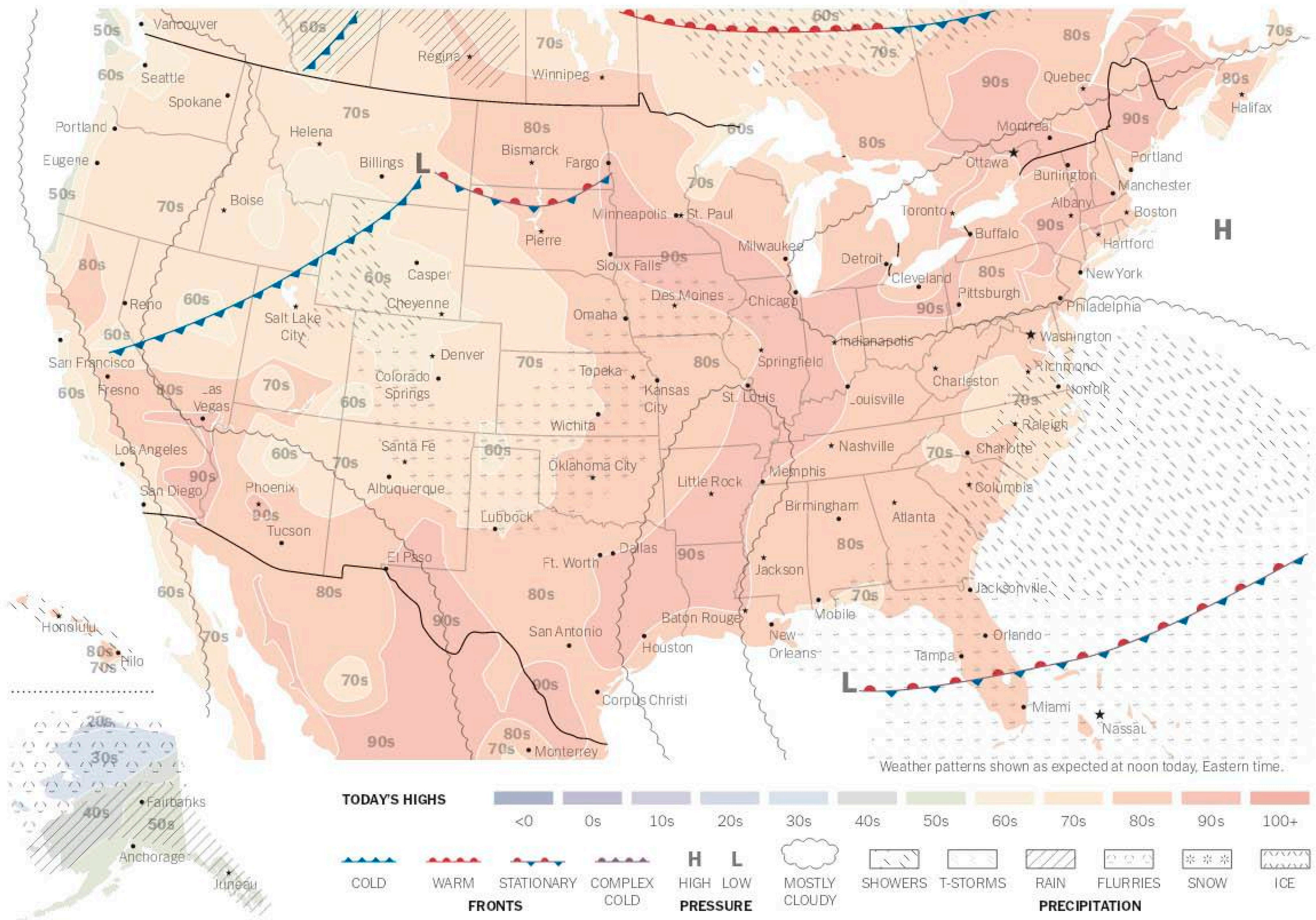
MARSHAL EXECUTION SALE
PUBLIC AUCTION
RE: Parking Violations Vs Various Judgment Debtors I Will Sell At Public Auction for City Marshal Richard A. Capuano By Arthur Vigar Auctioneer on Monday, June 5, 2023 At 10:00AM At Five J's Towing 62-02 Beach Channel Drive Arverne, New York, 11692
All R/T/I in & to the Following Vehicles:

23 BMW	5UXCY6C0XP9N55515
00 JEEP	1J4FF48S2YL154896
07 MERCED	4JGBF71E37A170511
16 HYUNDAI	5NPDH4AE0GH740401
02 CHEVR	3GNEK13T82G1255980
02 HONDA	JHLRD78862C086014
00 HONDA	1HGEJ6673YL038358
10 BMW	WBASN4C58AC208214
11 TOYOTA	2T3BF4DV6BW096364
08 CHRYSL	1C3LC46J08N226179
01 FORD	1FMZU77E51UB26916
07 HYUNDAI	KM8NU73C27U007412
11 HONDA	5J6RE4H38BL019616
05 V W	WVWAD63B75P058937
10 MERCED	WDDGF8BB1AR126266
08 MERCURY	4M2EU488X8UJ16235
00 NISSAN	1N4DL01A0YC154238
08 DODGE	1B3LC56R18N254016
08 TOYOTA	JTDKB20U287701210
02 NISSAN	JN8DR09Y72W705897
11 CHEVR	1GNSKJE31BR359035
03 MERCED	WDBPJ5JX3A036264
05 FORD	1FTNE24W85HB39819
05 HONDA	2HKYF181X5H548506
07 DODGE	WD0PE746475175301
08 FORD	1FMCU59H38KA60504
08 CHEVR	2G1WT58N681322469
Following Vehicles Sold With Liens	
04 LEXUS	JTHBA30GX45012569
17 NISSAN	KNMAT2MTXHP571297
05 TOYOTA	JTDBR32E852059186
12 NISSAN	1N4AL2AP3CN562247
14 BMW	WBA3B5C55EP544324
16 NISSAN	1N6AF0LY2GN814066
08 BMW	WBAVC93568K041464
18 MAZDA	JM3KFBDM9J0353717
15 NISSAN	5N1AZ2MH5FN264103
17 BMW	WBAJA7C38HG903741
16 V W	1VWBT7A3XGC049360
18 FORD	1FA6P8TH4J5174993
08 NISSAN	3N1AB61EX8L706518
10 NISSAN	1N4AL2EP8AC144155
16 GMC	2GKFLUE30G6231773
Following Vehicles Sold As Salvage	
12 FORD	1FBNE3BL3DDA14669
10 FORD	2FMHK6CC0ABA84905
12 NISSAN	1N4AL2AP2CC202401
05 MAZDA	JM3LW28SJ450534735
04 INFINITI	JNKCV51F74M706538

CASH ONLY Inspect ½Hr. Prior to Sale
City Marshal Richard A. Capuano
Phone (718)478-0400

Weather Report

Meteorology by **AccuWeather**



Weather patterns shown as expected at noon today, Eastern time.

Metropolitan Forecast

TODAY ....Clouds, then some sunshine

High 83. Dry weather will continue throughout the day with a mix of clouds and sunshine. It will be warmer than past days. There will be a light breeze at 4 to 8 miles per hour.

TONIGHT ....Partly cloudy

Low 62. It will remain dry through the night with a partly to mostly cloudy sky. Winds will be at 4 to 8 m.p.h.. Temperatures will be near average.

TOMORROW ....Warm with sunshine

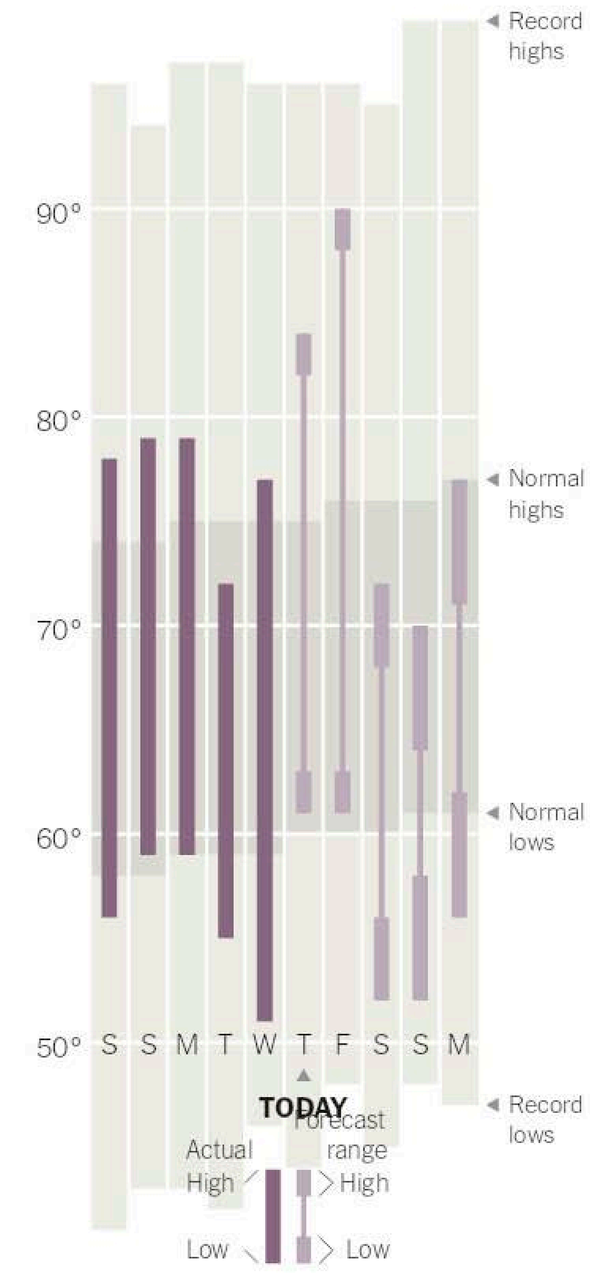
High 89. A dry day is expected with high pressure across the area. Temperatures will trend even higher with a mostly sunny sky. Winds will be at 4 to 8 m.p.h.

SATURDAY .....Breezy with thundershowers

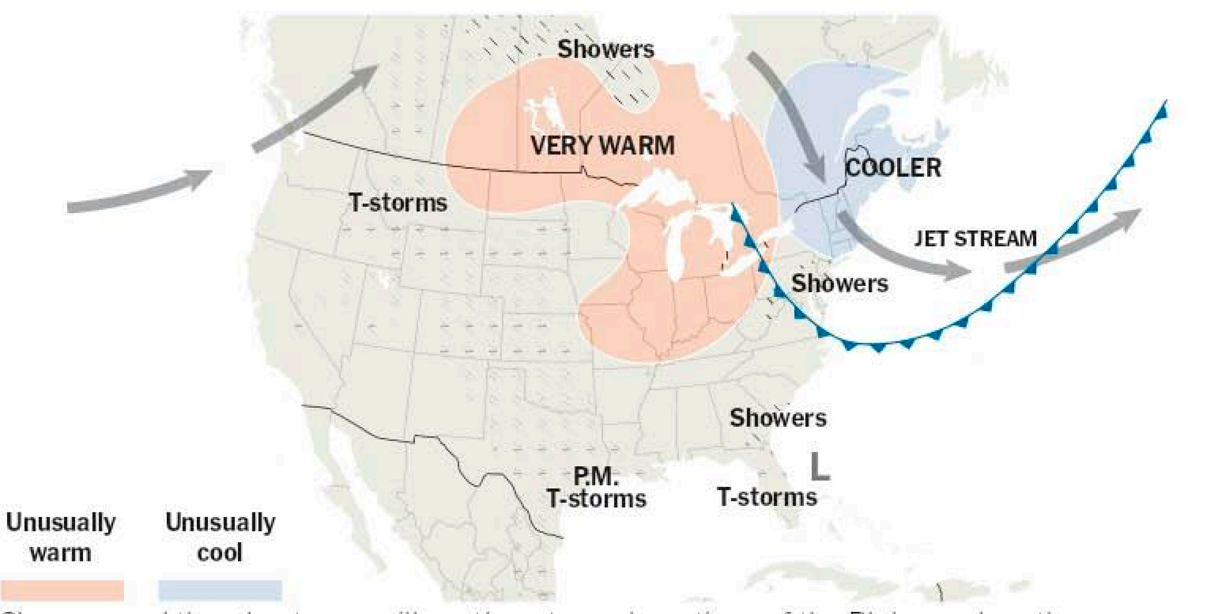
Saturday will be cloudier and cooler than past days in the wake of a backdoor cold front. Possible thunderstorms. Winds will be at 10 to 20 m.p.h. High 70.

SUNDAY
MONDAY ....Cooler with some sunshine

High pressure returning will bring dry conditions on Sunday with a mix of clouds and sunshine. High 67. Expect similar conditions on Monday. High 74.



Highlight: The Weekend Outlook



Showers and thunderstorms will continue to soak portions of the Plains and northern Rockies this weekend as southeasterly winds bring moist air into these regions. A storm will bring downpours to portions of Florida. The Great Lakes region will remain dry.

National Forecast

Dry conditions will continue over the Northeast, and heat from the northern tier of the Midwest and New England will expand southward as high pressure hovers just off the Atlantic Coast today. Clouds and spotty showers will linger from southeastern Virginia to eastern Georgia.

Meanwhile, a disturbance from the Gulf of Mexico that could acquire tropical characteristics will cause an uptick in gusty thunderstorms in Florida.

More thunderstorms will develop and become severe over parts of the Plains states today.

Some areas may be hit with high winds, large hail and flash flooding. More spotty thunderstorms will develop over the interior West in the afternoon. Much of the Pacific Coast will be dry, but low clouds may linger in some locations.

Metropolitan Almanac

In Central Park, for the 16 hours ended at 4 p.m. yesterday.

Temperature



Avg. daily departure from normal this month.............. -0.5°

Avg. daily departure from normal this year .... +4.0°

Reservoir levels (New York City water supply)

Yesterday 96%
Est. normal 99%

Precipitation (in inches)

Yesterday 0.00
Record 3.13

For the last 30 days
Actual 1.19
Normal 3.84

For the last 365 days
Actual 45.30
Normal 49.52

LAST 30 DAYS

Air pressure

High .... 30.26 8 a.m.
Low .... 30.18 4 p.m.

Humidity

High .... 89% 5 a.m.
Low .... 28% 1 p.m.

Cooling Degree Days

An index of fuel consumption that tracks how far the day's mean temperature rose above 65

Yesterday.. 0
So far this month................................ 45
So far this season (since January 1) 86
Normal to date for the season 81

Trends		Temperature (Average: Below / Above)	Precipitation (Average: Below / Above)
Last	10 days		
	30 days		
	90 days		
	365 days		

Chart shows how recent temperature and precipitation trends compare with those of the last 30 years.

Recreational Forecast

Sun, Moon and Planets

Full	Last Quarter	New	First Quarter
June 3 11:42 p.m.	June 10	June 18 12:37 a.m.	June 26

Sun	RISE	5:27 a.m.	**Moon**	S	3:40 a.m.
	SET	8:21 p.m.		R	5:53 p.m.
	NEXT R	5:27 a.m.		S	4:07 a.m.
Jupiter	R	3:39 a.m.	**Mars**	R	9:39 a.m.
	S	5:08 p.m.		S	12:11 a.m.
Saturn	R	1:28 a.m.	**Venus**	R	8:40 a.m.
	S	12:21 p.m.		S	11:43 p.m.

Boating

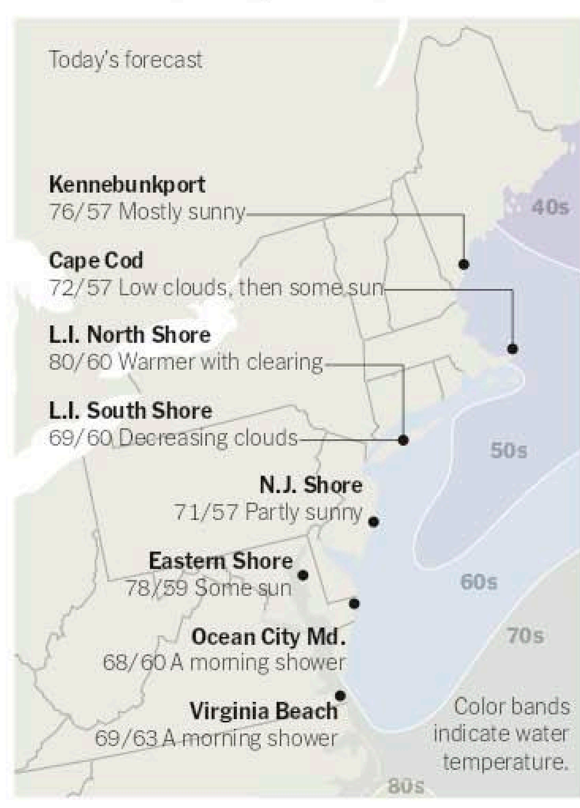
From Montauk Point to Sandy Hook, N.J., out to 20 nautical miles, including Long Island Sound and New York Harbor.

Winds will be south to southeast at 7-14 knots. Waves will be 1-3 feet on the ocean and less than 2 feet on Long Island Sound and New York Harbor. Visibility will generally be clear to the horizon.

High Tides

Atlantic City	5:49 a.m.	6:20 p.m.
Barnegat Inlet	6:03 a.m.	6:32 p.m.
The Battery	6:40 a.m.	7:04 p.m.
Beach Haven	7:28 a.m.	7:58 p.m.
Bridgeport	9:53 a.m.	10:03 p.m.
City Island	10:00 a.m.	9:55 p.m.
Fire Island Lt.	6:56 a.m.	7:26 p.m.
Montauk Point	7:41 a.m.	7:52 p.m.
Northport	10:06 a.m.	10:15 p.m.
Port Washington	10:13 a.m.	10:10 p.m.
Sandy Hook	6:10 a.m.	6:40 p.m.
Shinnecock Inlet	6:02 a.m.	6:26 p.m.
Stamford	9:54 a.m.	10:04 p.m.
Tarrytown	8:29 a.m.	8:53 p.m.
Willets Point	10:01 a.m.	9:57 p.m.

Beach and Ocean Temperatures



There will be a mostly sunny sky along the coastline today. Onshore winds may lead to some cooling during the afternoon hours. Rough surf may lead to dangerous swimming conditions along the Delmarva Coast. Thunderstorms may develop along the New England beaches tomorrow.

Cities

High/low temperatures for the 16 hours ended at 4 p.m. yesterday, Eastern time, and precipitation (in inches) for the 16 hours ended at 4 p.m. yesterday. Expected conditions for today and tomorrow.

C	Clouds	**S**	Sun
F	Fog	**Sn**	Snow
H	Haze	**SS**	Snow showers
I	Ice	**T**	Thunderstorms
PC	Partly cloudy	**Tr**	Trace
R	Rain	**W**	Windy
Sh	Showers	**–**	Not available

N.Y.C. region	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
New York City	77/ 51 0	83/ 61 PC	89/ 62 S
Bridgeport	68/ 49 0	76/ 58 PC	82/ 62 PC
Caldwell	80/ 45 0	87/ 55 PC	91/ 62 S
Danbury	79/ 43 0	86/ 52 PC	86/ 60 T
Islip	70/ 49 Tr	73/ 57 PC	83/ 58 PC
Newark	78/ 53 0	85/ 61 PC	90/ 63 S
Trenton	76/ 46 0	85/ 58 PC	88/ 61 S
White Plains	75/ 45 0	82/ 58 PC	86/ 59 S

United States	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Albany	88/ 57 0	94/ 61 S	90/ 62 T
Albuquerque	81/ 58 Tr	79/ 55 S	78/ 57 C
Anchorage	54/ 42 0.11	54/ 43 R	54/ 46 R
Atlanta	81/ 66 0.02	82/ 68 PC	84/ 65 PC
Atlantic City	67/ 59 0	70/ 56 PC	72/ 61 PC
Austin	89/ 67 0	90/ 65 PC	90/ 67 PC
Baltimore	80/ 59 0	86/ 59 PC	92/ 62 PC
Baton Rouge	89/ 68 0.04	90/ 68 PC	93/ 70 T
Birmingham	84/ 67 0.05	85/ 67 PC	88/ 68 PC
Boise	74/ 51 0.32	77/ 52 C	80/ 56 S
Boston	73/ 57 0	83/ 65 PC	82/ 55 T
Buffalo	86/ 60 0	90/ 61 S	84/ 62 PC
Burlington	90/ 59 0	94/ 64 S	87/ 60 Sh
Casper	80/ 50 0	63/ 48 T	65/ 48 T
Charlotte	77/ 60 0.01	82/ 62 PC	84/ 62 PC
Chattanooga	84/ 66 0.02	86/ 66 PC	89/ 64 PC
Chicago	89/ 66 0.06	89/ 64 T	89/ 64 S
Cincinnati	87/ 65 0	88/ 64 S	91/ 64 S
Cleveland	87/ 58 0	87/ 61 S	87/ 64 S
Colorado Springs	76/ 53 0.15	74/ 49 T	72/ 52 T
Columbus	86/ 62 0	91/ 65 S	93/ 66 S
Concord, N.H.	87/ 50 0	92/ 56 S	87/ 54 T
Dallas-Ft. Worth	89/ 70 0	88/ 69 S	90/ 70 S
Denver	78/ 51 0.15	72/ 50 T	71/ 49 T
Des Moines	88/ 65 0	85/ 67 PC	87/ 66 T
Detroit	88/ 60 0	89/ 61 S	89/ 64 PC
El Paso	95/ 69 0	89/ 68 PC	88/ 63 S
Fargo	90/ 66 0.04	91/ 69 T	90/ 67 T
Hartford	83/ 48 0	92/ 55 S	88/ 62 T
Honolulu	86/ 75 0	86/ 73 C	86/ 75 PC
Houston	88/ 69 0.04	90/ 70 T	92/ 71 S
Indianapolis	87/ 67 0	89/ 65 S	90/ 66 S
Jackson	87/ 64 0	86/ 65 PC	90/ 65 T
Jacksonville	81/ 69 0.04	78/ 68 T	82/ 68 T
Kansas City	79/ 65 0.46	84/ 66 PC	85/ 65 T
Key West	87/ 78 0.40	87/ 78 PC	87/ 78 T
Las Vegas	87/ 68 0	91/ 72 S	93/ 74 S
Lexington	87/ 64 0.05	89/ 63 T	91/ 66 S
Little Rock	89/ 67 0	91/ 70 S	90/ 70 PC
Los Angeles	66/ 57 0	67/ 58 PC	70/ 57 PC
Louisville	88/ 67 0.02	89/ 67 T	94/ 67 S
Memphis	88/ 69 0	88/ 70 PC	91/ 71 PC
Miami	86/ 75 0.61	83/ 74 T	84/ 72 T
Milwaukee	82/ 63 0.04	82/ 60 T	81/ 62 S
Mpls.-St. Paul	89/ 67 0.04	89/ 70 T	87/ 67 T
Nashville	86/ 66 0.05	85/ 66 T	90/ 67 PC
New Orleans	88/ 72 0.04	86/ 74 T	88/ 73 T
Norfolk	68/ 63 0.02	70/ 62 PC	73/ 65 PC
Oklahoma City	84/ 65 0	81/ 64 T	82/ 63 T
Omaha	87/ 66 0	85/ 66 T	86/ 65 T
Orlando	86/ 70 0.25	85/ 69 T	82/ 68 T
Philadelphia	80/ 58 0	88/ 62 S	91/ 65 S
Phoenix	92/ 69 0	92/ 70 S	94/ 73 S
Pittsburgh	86/ 55 0	88/ 59 S	90/ 67 S
Portland, Me.	74/ 52 0	82/ 60 S	84/ 53 R
Portland, Ore.	67/ 50 0	73/ 50 PC	78/ 52 PC
Providence	76/ 52 0	81/ 57 PC	83/ 57 T
Raleigh	79/ 60 0.01	79/ 63 Sh	83/ 61 PC
Reno	74/ 52 0.19	76/ 50 PC	80/ 55 S
Richmond	77/ 62 0	78/ 61 PC	84/ 61 PC
Rochester	86/ 56 0	89/ 59 S	83/ 60 S
Sacramento	78/ 51 0	83/ 52 S	88/ 56 S
Salt Lake City	83/ 60 0.04	78/ 59 T	71/ 59 T
San Antonio	88/ 70 0	89/ 68 PC	90/ 68 PC
San Diego	66/ 59 Tr	65/ 59 C	67/ 58 PC
San Francisco	65/ 53 0	66/ 53 PC	69/ 53 PC
San Jose	72/ 50 0	74/ 51 PC	78/ 54 PC
San Juan	90/ 77 0.04	91/ 78 PC	92/ 78 T
Seattle	63/ 47 0	68/ 47 C	72/ 51 PC
Sioux Falls	92/ 66 0.04	89/ 67 T	86/ 66 T
Spokane	71/ 46 0	73/ 52 PC	78/ 52 S
St. Louis	90/ 70 0.04	90/ 70 T	89/ 69 T
St. Thomas	88/ 79 0	89/ 79 PC	88/ 81 C
Syracuse	90/ 60 0	92/ 63 S	87/ 62 PC
Tampa	87/ 71 0.30	86/ 71 T	84/ 73 T
Toledo	89/ 57 0	91/ 57 S	91/ 64 S
Tucson	90/ 58 0	87/ 60 PC	89/ 64 S
Tulsa	88/ 66 0	88/ 66 T	86/ 67 T
Virginia Beach	67/ 63 0.04	69/ 62 PC	70/ 61 PC
Washington	80/ 63 0	86/ 62 PC	92/ 65 PC
Wichita	87/ 66 0.04	82/ 64 T	82/ 65 T
Wilmington, Del.	80/ 57 0	87/ 59 S	91/ 64 S

Africa	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Algiers	73/ 54 0.29	79/ 60 S	76/ 64 C
Cairo	97/ 72 0	101/ 79 C	107/ 75 S
Cape Town	64/ 55 0.02	67/ 50 PC	66/ 55 W
Dakar	82/ 76 0	84/ 74 PC	83/ 75 PC
Johannesburg	60/ 47 0.06	62/ 43 S	68/ 52 S
Nairobi	77/ 58 0.06	76/ 59 Sh	76/ 58 Sh
Tunis	77/ 62 0.18	74/ 62 T	79/ 66 C

Asia/Pacific	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Baghdad	102/ 81 0	100/ 74 S	103/ 78 PC
Bangkok	99/ 80 0.03	97/ 81 T	98/ 81 T
Beijing	82/ 62 0	92/ 64 PC	90/ 63 PC
Damascus	88/ 53 0	92/ 66 W	97/ 69 PC
Hong Kong	98/ 84 0.13	92/ 83 T	93/ 83 T
Jakarta	91/ 78 0	92/ 78 PC	93/ 80 PC
Jerusalem	79/ 59 0	90/ 74 S	99/ 72 PC
Karachi	91/ 83 0	94/ 84 T	94/ 85 PC
Manila	90/ 79 0.16	92/ 81 T	91/ 80 R
Mumbai	93/ 81 0	94/ 84 S	94/ 85 PC
New Delhi	87/ 71 0.07	92/ 72 C	92/ 74 PC
Riyadh	91/ 77 0	99/ 80 PC	102/ 80 PC
Seoul	81/ 65 0.01	81/ 61 PC	82/ 60 PC
Shanghai	82/ 69 0	85/ 71 PC	91/ 69 PC
Singapore	90/ 80 0.25	88/ 80 T	89/ 80 C
Sydney	75/ 48 0	73/ 55 PC	68/ 56 PC
Taipei City	83/ 77 0.52	83/ 75 R	92/ 75 R
Tehran	94/ 79 0.03	93/ 73 S	94/ 75 S
Tokyo	75/ 64 0.10	75/ 67 PC	74/ 67 R

Europe	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Amsterdam	68/ 50 0	60/ 46 C	64/ 50 PC
Athens	75/ 63 0.22	80/ 65 T	76/ 59 C
Berlin	77/ 47 0	73/ 50 S	71/ 46 PC
Brussels	75/ 49 0	70/ 45 S	67/ 49 S
Budapest	80/ 57 0.05	81/ 55 S	83/ 55 T
Copenhagen	68/ 51 0	68/ 49 S	64/ 47 S
Dublin	61/ 47 0	64/ 48 S	63/ 46 S
Edinburgh	60/ 47 0	62/ 45 C	62/ 47 PC
Frankfurt	79/ 54 0	82/ 53 S	75/ 53 PC
Geneva	75/ 55 0.07	78/ 56 PC	79/ 56 T
Helsinki	67/ 40 0	55/ 36 PC	52/ 38 Sh
Istanbul	79/ 63 0.01	79/ 63 PC	78/ 63 C
Kyiv	71/ 57 0	79/ 58 S	80/ 52 T
Lisbon	75/ 56 0	77/ 57 PC	78/ 59 PC
London	66/ 51 0	69/ 48 PC	69/ 46 PC
Madrid	79/ 55 0	74/ 56 T	73/ 54 T
Moscow	60/ 49 0.18	73/ 48 C	73/ 47 Sh
Nice	77/ 66 0.11	76/ 65 T	76/ 65 T
Oslo	73/ 48 0	67/ 41 PC	67/ 45 PC
Paris	79/ 55 0	82/ 52 S	74/ 52 S
Prague	73/ 45 0	78/ 50 PC	70/ 45 PC
Rome	79/ 59 0	77/ 61 PC	77/ 61 PC
St. Petersburg	64/ 42 0.04	57/ 36 PC	54/ 39 S
Stockholm	69/ 50 0	56/ 37 PC	58/ 38 PC
Vienna	77/ 52 0	80/ 54 PC	79/ 51 PC
Warsaw	72/ 47 0	79/ 52 S	63/ 42 S

North America	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Acapulco	90/ 76 0	90/ 76 S	91/ 77 S
Bermuda	78/ 71 0.14	75/ 71 R	75/ 72 R
Edmonton	67/ 47 0.17	62/ 41 R	74/ 52 C
Guadalajara	90/ 59 0	95/ 60 S	96/ 59 S
Havana	82/ 71 0.15	86/ 70 T	88/ 69 T
Kingston	86/ 81 0.06	89/ 79 T	88/ 80 T
Martinique	87/ 77 0.32	89/ 79 PC	89/ 79 PC
Mexico City	82/ 57 0	86/ 59 S	87/ 60 C
Monterrey	89/ 69 0	86/ 71 T	85/ 70 T
Montreal	87/ 58 0	93/ 66 S	83/ 56 Sh
Nassau	83/ 76 0.21	84/ 76 T	85/ 75 T
Panama City	88/ 75 0.10	87/ 76 R	86/ 76 T
Quebec City	88/ 53 0	91/ 63 PC	72/ 52 PC
Santo Domingo	88/ 74 0.07	90/ 76 T	89/ 77 T
Toronto	87/ 60 0	89/ 65 S	89/ 66 PC
Vancouver	60/ 47 0	65/ 49 S	67/ 52 C
Winnipeg	81/ 57 0	88/ 66 T	90/ 67 T

South America	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Buenos Aires	63/ 54 0.02	66/ 61 S	70/ 60 C
Caracas	89/ 75 0.27	91/ 75 T	91/ 75 T
Lima	73/ 67 0	74/ 67 S	75/ 66 PC
Quito	64/ 48 0.04	63/ 48 R	62/ 48 Sh
Recife	84/ 75 0.06	84/ 76 Sh	85/ 76 PC
Rio de Janeiro	72/ 68 0.24	77/ 67 S	75/ 68 PC
Santiago	72/ 39 0	65/ 45 PC	63/ 46 R

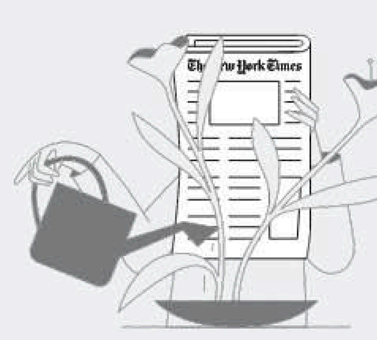
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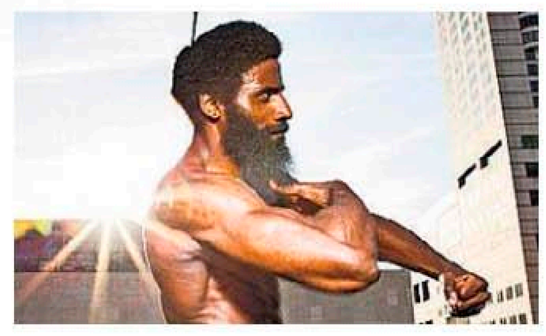


2 MUSIC
Julia Wolfe ministers to the climate crisis. BY DAVID ALLEN

3 TELEVISION
Getting away with murder in showbiz. BY JAMES PONIEWOZIK







5 DANCE
Brian Henry's krump moves are human lightning and thunder. BY BRIAN SEIBERT

Arts
The New York Times



RYAN PFLUGER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Showboat, Then Leader in Assists

How Phil Dunster, a charismatic British actor playing a cocky soccer player, evolved from villain to hero on 'Ted Lasso.'

By CALUM MARSH

The new Jamie Tartt is very different from the old Jamie Tartt. As played by Phil Dunster, a 31-year-old English actor, the Tartt that closes out the third and probably final season of "Ted Lasso" is earnest, candid and emotionally mature — a far cry from the bratty, egotistic playboy and soccer star we were introduced to in Season 1.

That Tartt was selfish and preening, a ball hog on the pitch and a thorn in the side of those forced to put up with him, including his AFC Richmond coach, Ted Lasso (Jason Sudeikis); his professional rival turned personal trainer, Roy Kent (Brett Goldstein); and his on-again, off-again girlfriend, Keeley Jones (Juno Temple). Recent episodes of the hit Apple TV+ comedy have found Tartt opening up to those characters, among others, and learning to forgive his

CONTINUED ON PAGE C4

'It was easier to make him unlikable and trust the writing to show that he was redeemable.'
PHIL DUNSTER
ON HIS CHARACTER JAMIE TARTT

'Mongolian Rhapsody'? A Rock What-If.

A Freddie Mercury draft, up for bid, has 'Bohemian' subbed in.

By ALEX MARSHALL

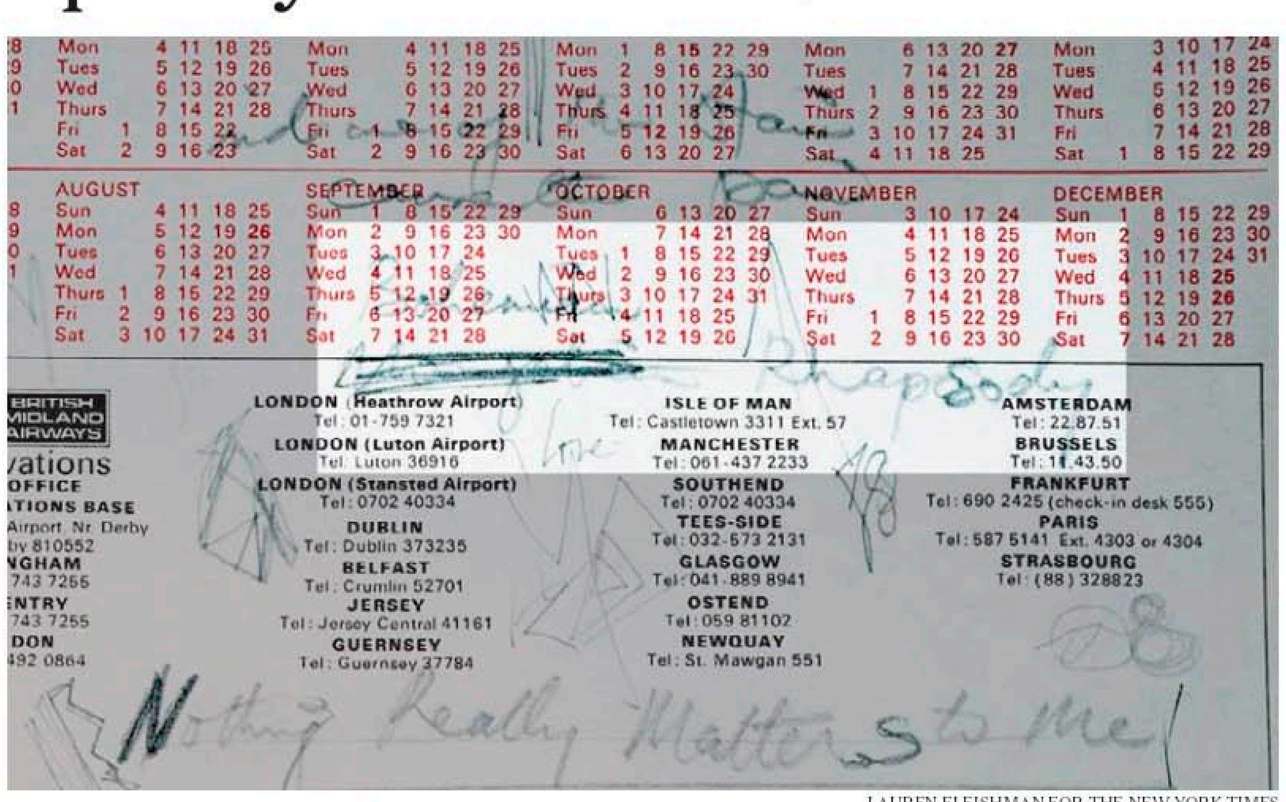
LONDON — It's one of rock's best-known and strangest songs: a six-minute radio hit that starts out as a piano ballad, becomes a high-pitched opera, then tumbles into a headbanger's anthem. Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody," released in 1975, sold millions of copies, topped charts and helped redefine what pop music could be.

But the track's history could have been very different — in one aspect, at least.

An early draft of the song by Freddie Mercury, Queen's frontman, suggests that he once considered giving the anthem a different title: "Mongolian Rhapsody."

The draft is among thousands of Mercury's belongings to be auctioned in September by Sotheby's on behalf of his friend and heir Mary Austin, who told the BBC

CONTINUED ON PAGE C6



LAUREN FLEISHMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A draft of Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody," written by Freddie Mercury on airline stationery, is among the rock star's belongings that Sotheby's will auction. (The edited title is highlighted.)

A Change of Key Jars Music Lovers

The Los Angeles Philharmonic must cope with the departures of two stalwarts.

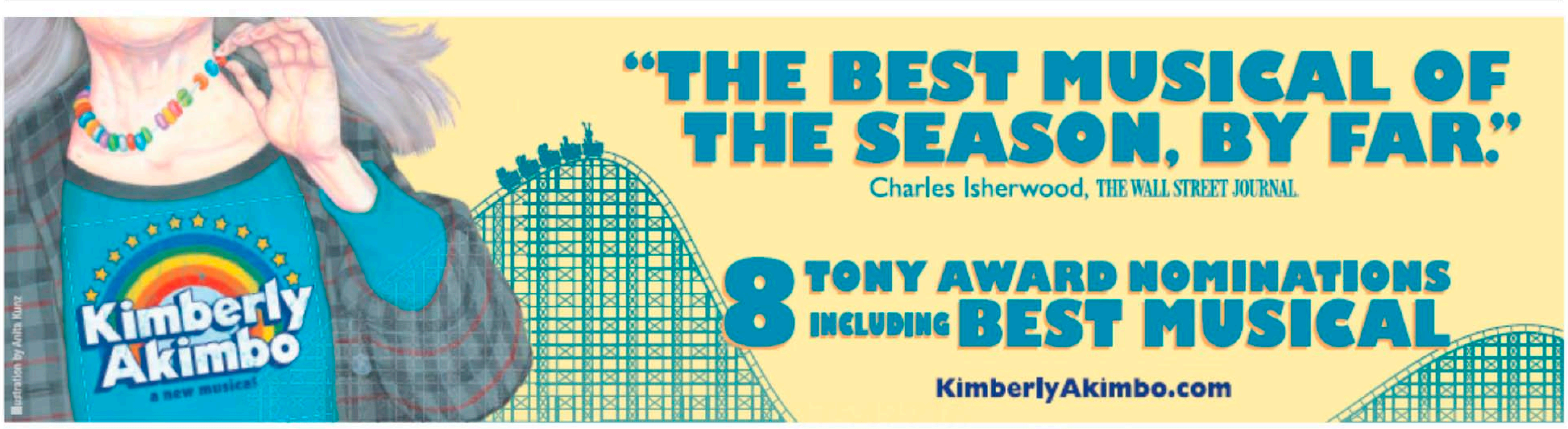
By ADAM NAGOURNEY, JOSHUA BARONE and JAVIER C. HERNÁNDEZ

LOS ANGELES — One of the most significant developments in American classical music this century has been the ascendancy of the Los Angeles Philharmonic: a showcase of talent, inventive programming and strong finances that has become the envy of other orchestras.

Now the institution is facing one of its biggest challenges in decades.

First, Gustavo Dudamel, the orchestra's popular music director, announced he would leave in 2026 to become the next music director of the New York Philharmonic. A few months later, Chad Smith, the Los Angeles Philharmonic's chief executive, who

CONTINUED ON PAGE C7



She Balances Both the Politics And the Poetry

Julia Wolfe, a composer, shifts her focus to climate change in her oratorio-like work 'unEarth.'

By DAVID ALLEN

Julia Wolfe, a Pulitzer Prize-winning composer and a co-founder of Bang on a Can, has a way with words.

In "Anthracite Fields," the coal-dark highlight of a series of folklike, oratorio-adjacent works in which Wolfe, 64, has been putting American injustices under her unsparing sonic microscope, she lists the men named John with single-syllable surnames who can be found on an index of Pennsylvania mining accidents — a litany hundreds of Johns long.

Her memorial to the Triangle shirtwaist factory disaster, "Fire in my mouth," concludes with an ethereal incantation of the 146 workers who died, their names drifting in sound, as if into the smoke of history. "Her Story," a reflection on women's rights, quotes some of the choicest insults that were spat at suffragists a century ago, as if to ask whether they sound familiar today.

Now comes "unEarth," a confrontation with climate change that premieres on Thursday at the New York Philharmonic, with Jaap van Zweden leading the soprano Else Torp, the men of the Crossing and the Young People's Chorus of New York City, in a staging by the director Anne Kauffman. It starts, and ends, with words sung by the children who helped write them.

"Of course, it's so important for everyone but particularly poignant for younger people," Wolfe said of the climate crisis in a recent interview. "A lot of the leadership right now, a lot of the feisty leadership is coming from young people, particularly from young women."



CAITLIN OCHS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



AMRITA STUETZLE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Right, Julia Wolfe, whose musical works have grown increasingly political. "I can be poetic, poetic, poetic," she says, "but then at a certain point it's like, what are we doing here?" Above, Wolfe's "Fire in my mouth" being performed at David Geffen Hall in 2019.

The texts that Wolfe uses in "unEarth" have a sense of literary adventure familiar from her earlier oratorios. She read widely to research it, and noted the influence of such writers as Sami Grover, Peter Wohlleben and Elizabeth Kolbert, a friend. The libretto draws on Emily Dickinson and the book of Genesis; in the second movement of three, "Forest," the word tree is translated into myriad languages, which she pounds into a celebration of all things arboreal, backed by conga drums.

"She is always taking kernels of text that have a lot of resonance in the stories of the world we live in," Donald Nally, the conductor of the Crossing, said of Wolfe. "Honestly, at some point, you start to stop thinking about the words and you drift off into larger ideas."

Many of Wolfe's compositions — another, an orchestral work called "Pretty," will premiere at the Berlin Philharmonic next week, under its chief conductor, Kirill Petrenko, a Wolfe admirer — have had political themes. But the larger ideas of "unEarth" are more directly delivered than those of any of her other socially conscious but primarily historical oratorios, dating back to "Steel Hammer" more than a decade ago.

The impulse to speak plainly comes not just from the subject matter, but from Wolfe's chosen collaborators. When she decided to involve the Young People's Chorus in the work, as she had in "Fire," she sought the input of its singers; she and Kauffman asked its conductors to lead the choristers in discussions about the climate crisis, and recorded them.

"Something that I remember is everybody agreeing on this sense of urgency," Ryoko Leyh, 16, said of the conversations she took part in. "Everybody was saying something like 'I'm scared,' or 'I'm always thinking about it, it's always on my mind and making me anxious.' So I feel like we all had different ideas of what is actually going on and what we can do to stop climate change, but we all had that collective sense of dread."

The children of the chorus come from all kinds of educational backgrounds, said Francisco J. Núñez, its artistic director. For many of them, the discussions were a learning opportunity; some were as young as 8.

"It really made me think on how impactful learning about climate change and global warming itself can be on the young population," Irene Cunto, 12, said, "because at the end, we'll be the ones that's facing it."

The process was instructive for Wolfe, too. She was amazed at the subtlety of the conversations, and decided to use parts of them in the piece. It begins with a quotation of one of the most junior participants, who saw global warming as "like a monster devouring the Earth." The work ends with another quotation, this time of an older singer, as their phrase "hope requires action" is chanted like a mantra, before the chorus and the soprano demand that the audience "act," with an insistent, if fearful and minor-key, final crescendo.

"We just feel powerless because of this idea that we've inherited all these problems and now it's our responsibility to fix everything," Leyh said, pointing to the importance of the chorus singing words its members have written themselves. "It's like we're being given a platform that we don't usually have, literally, to say what we want to say in a way that we know is going to be heard."

Making the Young People's Chorus the voice of hope in "unEarth," and ensuring that the audience would have to look at them "in the face," as Wolfe put it, offered the composer something of a way through the dilemmas involved in creating explicitly political art, a challenge that climate-conscious composers are finding becomes more acute as catastrophes grow. Wolfe said that she was trying not to be too didactic, but that she was content with her solution in the final movement, "Fix It," which lists a number of ways individuals can make a difference — Meatless Mondays, No Mow May — as well as broader policy concepts, like "reforestation" and "solarification."

"I can be poetic, poetic, poetic," Wolfe said, "but then at a certain point it's like, what are we doing here?"

The Philharmonic commissioned "unEarth" after the success of "Fire in my mouth" four years ago, and is presenting it on the first of two programs that make up "Earth," a climate mini-festival. The second program, next week, includes the belated local premiere of John Luther Adams's "Become Desert," which debuted in Seattle five years ago.

"In the end, music is about emotion," said Deborah Borda, the president and chief executive of the Philharmonic, "and Julia is able to combine, in that way that we cannot quite explain, a combination of beauty and emotion. It carries an even stronger message as a result."

Each of Wolfe's oratorios offers a different answer to the question of where the balance of poetry and politics lies, though she sees a progression through them. "Anthracite Fields" was not exactly shy about its views — it sets a speech by John L. Lewis, the militant leader of the United Mine Workers — but, as one listener pointed out to her, it does not explicitly mention protest. "Fire," partly as a consequence, has an entire, thumping movement called "Protest." "Her Story" is more of an inquiry into change than an indictment of the past, but as Wolfe put it, "it's a little sassier."

"UnEarth," though, includes lines like "the house is on fire" and "clean up your corporation." It goes further, and with good reason.

"The others were more reflective: 'Who were we?' 'Who are we?' " Wolfe said. "And this is like: 'Guess what. We have to do something.' "

OUSSAMA ZAHR | OPERA REVIEW

Rising and Raging, a Bass-Baritone Returns to Shore

Tomasz Konieczny brought power and clarity to a classic.

ON TUESDAY NIGHT, four years after being hailed as the breakout star of a revival of Wagner's "Ring" at the Metropolitan Opera, Tomasz Konieczny returned there to headline "Der Fliegende Holländer," or "The Flying Dutchman." It was worth the wait.

Konieczny's Dutchman, cursed to ride the seas endlessly in a ghost ship with black masts and red sails, seemed to channel supernatural forces as he emerged from the bowels of François Girard's unremittingly dark production. Konieczny possesses an instrument of granitic power and brassy resonance, combining the depth of a tuba with the brightly penetrating cast of a trumpet. He can also cover his voice and fill it with pitiful tears. His attack is astonishingly clean; he inflates a straight tone to a vibrating roar and makes it sound like an exquisite cri de coeur.

Peter Gelb, the Met's general manager, offered the role to Konieczny, a Polish bass-baritone, in 2019 when Gelb heard Konieczny's company debut as Alberich in the "Ring" that year. Konieczny brought unusual charisma and nobility to the designated villain of Wagner's epic tetralogy, and his Dutchman is likewise a complex creation.

A tragic figure whose stoic demeanor masks a writhing pain within, Konieczny's Dutchman rises above earthly concerns but rages with focused fury against the ever-fresh torments of his Sisyphean predicament. His invincibility has made him disdainful of humans and desperate for death, and yet he harbors a romanticized fixation upon love. The Dutchman comes ashore once every seven years in search of a woman who can redeem him with her fidelity and break his curse. (Of course, the premise contains passive-aggressive misogyny — that a man in search of a faithful woman is doomed to look for her forever.)

As Senta, the woman who returns the apparitional captain's obsessive attention, Elza van den Heever sang with a ductile soprano. In "Senta's Ballad," she catapulted into high-lying phrases with strength and point and drew her voice into a slender thread for beautifully formed pianissimo high notes.

As infatuation consumed her, van den Heever summoned the tonal amplitude to fill out Wagner's portrait of a love that is annihilating in its totality.

The clear thrust of Eric Cutler's tenor gave the role of Erik, Senta's abandoned lover, unusual poignancy. The bass Dmitry Belosselskiy effectively rendered Daland, Senta's venal, easily dazzled father, as a strong yet foolish man who would trade his daughter for riches.



KEN HOWARD/METROPOLITAN OPERA

Tomasz Konieczny and Elza van den Heever in Wagner's "Der Fliegende Holländer," or "The Flying Dutchman."

Girard's production — like his recent "Lohengrin" — attempts to get a lot of mileage out of a few ideas. It's long on ambience, with billowing fog and undertones of sickly, hallucinogenic greens, and short on storytelling.

Der Fliegende Holländer
CRITIC'S PICK
Through June 10 at the Metropolitan Opera in Manhattan; metopera.org.

Fortunately, the 29-year-old conductor Thomas Guggeis, making his Met debut, added depth to the atmosphere of roiling fantasy.

The overture came alive with stormy eddies and pulsating vigor, even as video projections of a maelstrom and cracks of lightning felt redundant. The strings, in particular, found imaginative colors: Their throbbing vitality, unabashed romance and otherworldly shrieks covered the range of a work that swings from bel canto influences to the enthralling mythmaking that would become Wagner's signature.

There were some missed opportunities — such as the dark timbres that color the Act II duet for Senta and the Dutchman — but overall, Guggeis was a confident, sensitive, decisive presence.

At times, Girard's abstract staging still seems to distrust the material, but kinetic conducting and a richly characterized central performance show that it may simply have been waiting for a few artists to redeem it.

JAMES PONIEWOZIK | CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

Actors, Killers: They're A Lot Alike

'Barry' made the culture of violence and the culture of showbiz into collaborators.

This article includes spoilers for the "Barry" series finale.



HBO

Fred Melamed, left, and Bill Hader in the series finale of "Barry."

WHEN "BARRY" PREMIERED, the dark HBO comedy seemed like a classic two-track TV series: There was the crime story, and there was the showbiz story. Its oddball premise followed Barry Berkman (the star, co-creator and director Bill Hader), a traumatized ex-Marine turned hit man who took up acting as a respite from his deadly day job.

One path of the series tabulated Barry's body count as he became entangled in the Los Angeles mob wars, made fitful attempts at redemption and blazed through a series of one last jobs. Another path circled the outskirts of Hollywood fame, as Barry joined an acting class taught by the well-cured ham Gene Cousineau (Henry Winkler) and dated Sally Reed (Sarah Goldberg), a talented but struggling fellow student.

But by the final season, which ended on Sunday, those two paths had merged like strands of Los Angeles freeway. The brutality of show business, the performativity of murder — they are all, in "Barry," part of the same production.

Series like "The Sopranos," whose mobsters quoted "The Godfather" like gospel, have played with the idea of criminals imitating the Hollywood conception of themselves. But most such stories tend to be more comfortable on one side of the divide than the other; Christopher Moltisanti's attempt to break into screenwriting on "The Sopranos," for instance, was not among the finest moments in the series.

"Barry," on the other hand, sees both worlds as sharing compromises and delusions. Barry breaks into acting by drawing on his experience as a killer, as when he tells a story about being a hit man that Gene takes for a dramatic improvisation. He lands a role on the TV series "Laws of Humanity," an odd gig for a man who breaks laws and has little humanity left in him. And his criminal activity leads him to work with NoHo Hank (a scene-stealing Anthony Carrigan), a Chechen mobster who models himself as a kind of impresario.

Meanwhile, Sally — herself a victim of abusive relationships and industry sexism — reveals her own vicious streak as she gets a streaming series made and goes viral for having a screaming meltdown at her former assistant. If it takes a kind of diva egocentrism to commit murder, "Barry" suggests, it also requires a monstrous streak to fully commit to Hollywood.

Through the first three seasons, the show's sendups of violence and pop culture were effective, but often felt separate. They came fully together in the final season, beginning with the premiere, in which Barry finally lands in prison for killing Gene's girlfriend, a police officer who figured out his criminal identity.

He's received in jail as a celebrity, including by the prison staff, who are bowled over by the idea that he was on TV. "I know they say you did a bad thing," a besotted guard tells him. "But I'm sure you're not a bad guy."

Of course, Barry is a bad guy, whatever his sad history. In his less delusional moments, even he realizes this. But what he benefits from is the TV myth of the flawed but fascinating criminal.

Over its four seasons, "Barry" often risked becoming the sort of thing that it critiqued: a stylish antihero show that makes ultraviolence entertaining. It was good at that, almost too good.

A series that often risked becoming the thing that it critiqued.

Hader, who directed much of the series, including the full final season, is unusually talented at depicting mayhem for someone from his comedy background — although maybe his gift owes something to that background. The violence in "Barry," like a good comedy sketch, is surprising in a way that screen carnage rarely is anymore.

Absurdly overpowered firefights blaze up out of nowhere and go spectacularly wrong. Whereas most movie and TV shootouts lead the viewer by the hand — showing you who did what to whom — "Barry" lets the confusion of battle play out in widescreen, knowing that the point of chaos is that you don't get all the information you want right away.

Its violence is even funny — not "ha-ha" funny so much as "I didn't see *that* coming" funny. What it isn't is noble or awesome or cool.

Nether is Barry. He is, in a way, sympathetic, broken and badly used — especially by Fuches (Stephen Root), the handler who monetized Barry's talent for killing. But he's missing something, which becomes clearer as he tries to make amends. He sees redemption as a mechanical process — you follow the steps, make some payments and get the results — rather than an internal struggle. (That someone so emotionally unintuitive could become a working actor underscored the show's Hollywood critique.)

I wrote, after the stunning end of the first season, that it would have been a gutsy and satisfying move to end the series right there. I'm mostly glad the show went on, although it sometimes had the overextended feeling of a trilogy whose last installment was split in half by the studio. (The third season's finale, in which Gene uses his thespian skills to lure Barry into a police trap, would also have made a great series ending.)

But in the final run of "Barry," the idea of what it takes to earn redemption returns ingeniously. And the endgame is set off, naturally, by a movie.

A midseason time jump finds Barry and Sarah living incognito with a young son in a dusty Nowheresville, where they learn that a film project based on Barry's story is in development. This lures Gene out of his own exile; first he resists having a movie studio sensationalize the case, but ultimately he's unable to resist the limelight. It also brings Barry back to Los Angeles, to kill off his old acting teacher; he doesn't succeed, but he ends up getting Gene falsely implicated in the murder.

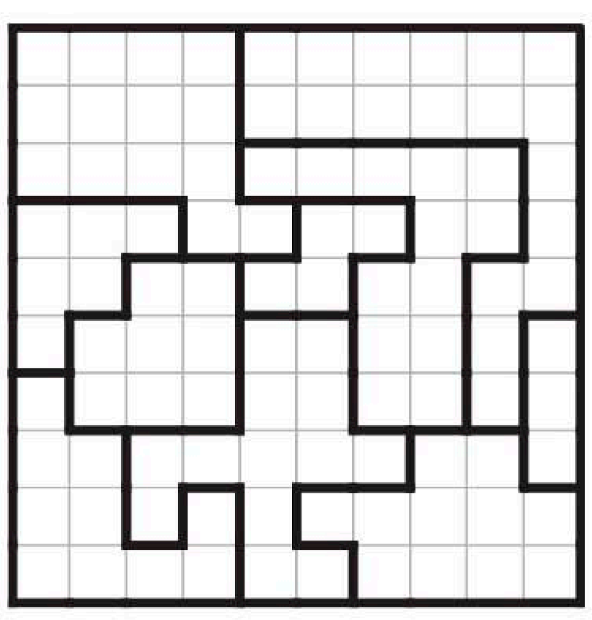
A few abductions and one more mass-casualty shootout later, Barry again seems to have escaped consequences — until Sally, finally shaken out of her resignation, tells him that he can only redeem himself by taking responsibility for his actions. But when at long last he decides to do so, his teacher gets the drop on him and shoots him dead.

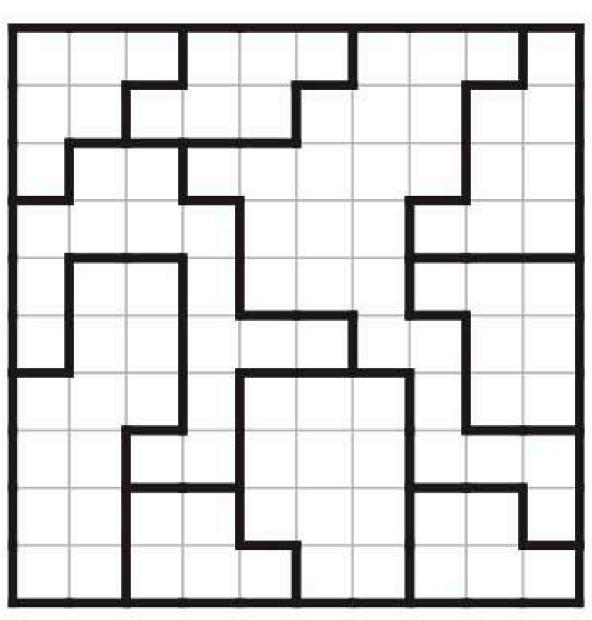
Did Barry truly change for the better, and for good? We don't know; he's tried before, then gone shopping for rationalizations to back out. Gene has done him a perverse favor, killing him the second he offers to turn himself in — and in the process, eliminating the one person who might have cleared Gene's name.

Instead, after one more time jump, we find Barry's son sneaking to a friend's house to watch the movie, which portrays Barry as a naïve victim, manipulated by Gene, a sneering criminal mastermind. Gene may have won the final showdown, but he has lost his eternal reputation.

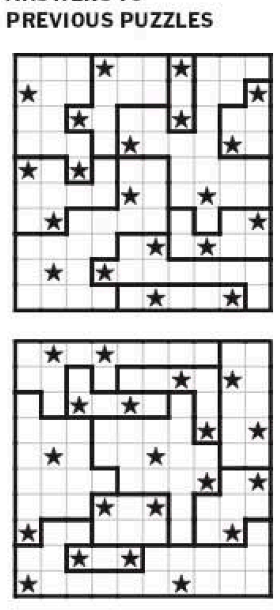
As for Barry, if he was never redeemed in reality, he has been by fiction, in a made-for-Hollywood lie. It's the perfect crime.

Two Not Touch





ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PUZZLES



Put two stars in each row, column and region of the grid. No two stars may touch, not even diagonally.

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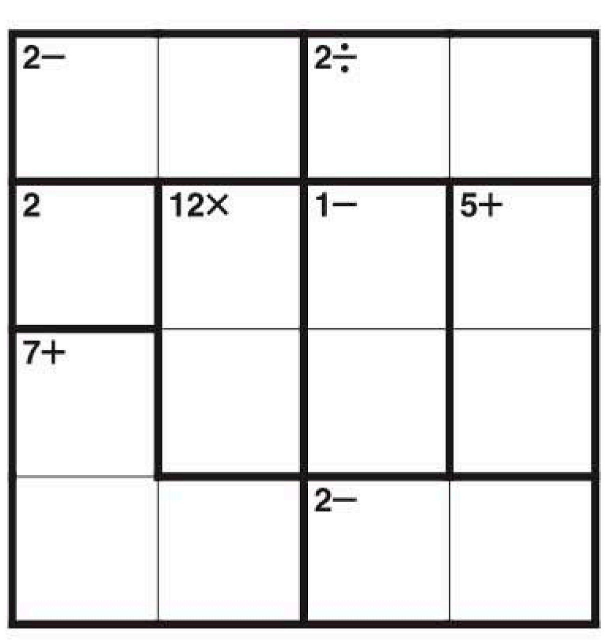
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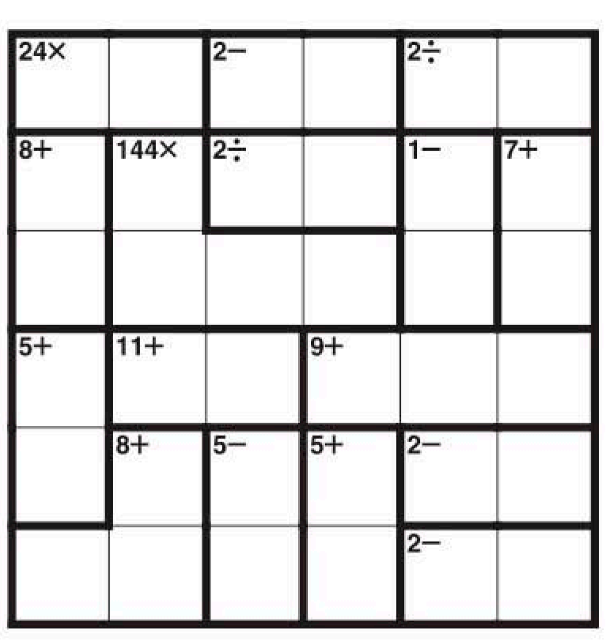
BI DQHDYQI OPYYNJ GPV OPVVDH PAPI. XJ'V P WXC QNVV, WLJ PQVN P ADXCGJ NRR BI VGNLQHDYV.

PUZZLE BY BEN BASS

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER Timber wolf

KenKen





ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PUZZLES

2	1	3	4
3	2	4	1
1	4	2	3
4	3	1	2

3	5	6	4	1	2
6	3	2	5	4	1
2	6	4	1	5	3
1	4	3	2	6	5
4	1	5	3	2	6
5	2	1	6	3	4

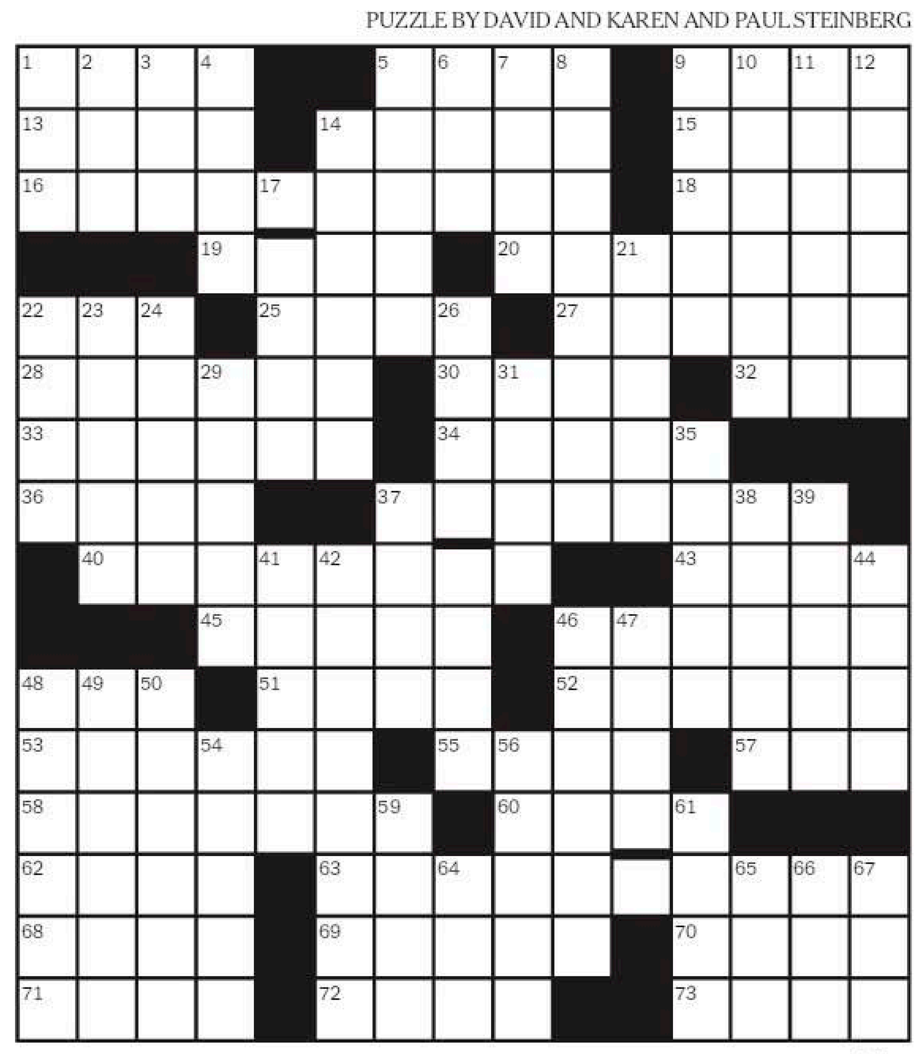
Fill the grid with digits so as not to repeat a digit in any row or column, and so that the digits within each heavily outlined box will produce the target number shown, by using addition, subtraction, multiplication or division, as indicated in the box. A 4x4 grid will use the digits 1-4. A 6x6 grid will use 1-6.

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Crossword | Edited by Will Shortz

PUZZLE BY DAVID AND KAREN AND PAUL STEINBERG



6/1/23

ACROSS

1 Gather
5 Late-spring celebrant
9 Some of these fasten in the front
13 Light ring
14 Subtle expression of contempt, in modern lingo
15 Brick in a kit
16 Not up to us
18 Salt Lake City team
19 Increase the intensity of
20 Hotter substitute for jalapeño
22 "Double" or "triple" brew
25 Extended family
27 Primal drive
28 Calling for tails, maybe
30 Crude letters
32 Grammy equivalent
33 "Airplane!" and "This Is Spinal Tap"
34 Food that's folded
36 Boot
37 Doctor's reassurance before a shot
40 Small, fancy confections
43 Settings for naval gazing?
45 Brand by a bathroom sink
46 Not out
48 Director DuVernay
51 Store with a suggested navigational path
52 Fancy bash
53 Win-win
55 Possible cause for insomnia
57 Watchdog warning
58 "Do you see?"
60 Made amends
62 Make amendments?
63 Reliable, to a lender
68 City associated with pasta carbonara
69 Vibes
70 Relative of a cor anglais
71 Really take off
72 Wild animal with dangerous 73-Across
73 See 72-Across

DOWN

1 Fraternity row letter with a homophone in this clue
2 Fontaine contents
3 Key in a macro
4 Christopher Robin's "silly old" chum
5 Major exporter of gold and cocoa
6 Managed
7 Puts on
8 Turn off, digitally
9 Book teaser
10 Hold on to
11 Something a chair needs
12 "Is it time already?"
14 Racing boats
17 Coffee with less kick
21 Printer brand
22 "Should that be the case ..."
23 Short-term shop
24 Came about
26 Pretty darn good
29 Vermont's "Freedom and Unity," e.g.
31 Trashes
35 Food that's rolled
37 Dot on a nautical map
38 Corp. shake-up
39 Less wild
41 Like some whiskey
42 One way to get around in urban areas
44 Prognosticator
46 Barring changes
47 Inning part when the visiting team bats
48 Incenses
49 Religion with West African and Catholic influences
50 First Nissan model offered as a hybrid
54 River gamboler
56 Palindromic tracker
59 Loyal
61 Quit discussing
64 Swinging Sixties, e.g.
65 As yet unknown, for short
66 Good question
67 Good answer

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

N	S	F	W			R	E	B	U	S		S	H	H
E	T	A	I	L		E	X	I	S	T		B	A	E
W	O	L	F	B	L	I	T	Z	E	R		A	T	A
A	L	L	I	S	O	N				A	B	L	E	R
R	E	T			T	I	G	E	R	W	O	O	D	S
K	N	O	W	N		N	O	R	A		G	A	I	T
			I	C	E		V	I	N	C	E	N	T	
		B	E	A	S	T	I	E	B	O	Y	S		
	S	E	N	A	T	O	R		Y	E	E			
A	N	T	E		A	R	A	B		D	D	A	Y	S
B	E	A	R	G	R	Y	L	L	S			T	E	M
R	A	T	S	O				E	N	T	I	T	L	E
U	K	E		B	U	F	F	A	L	O	B	I	L	L
P	I	S		A	S	Y	E	T		P	I	L	O	T
T	N	T		G	A	I	N	S			S	A	W	S

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Showboat, and Then Leader in Assists

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1

abusive father (Kieran O'Brien). Most surprising of all, he's leading the Premier League in assists: The showboat is now a team player.

In the finale on Wednesday — light spoilers start now — Jamie lands a Nike commercial in Brazil, shares a long-brewing heart-to-heart with Roy and visits his father in recovery, showing how much progress he's made over the last three years.

It has been a drastic reinvention for a character once known strictly for bad-boy smarm. And Dunster, faced with making this transformation convincing, had doubts that he could pull it off.

"I was terrified constantly," he admitted in a video call last week from his flat in London. "Every time I read a new script, I would think, [expletive], I don't know how to do that."

He credits Sudeikis, as the star and co-creator of the series, with helping him through it, especially in a major scene in Episode 11 in which Tartt breaks down and weeps over the stress of an impending game before his hometown crowd. "There are some lovely things people have said after that episode, and the honest answer is that it was Jason's idea," Dunster said.

Affable and boyish, with a thoughtful air that often had him gazing off into the middle distance before he spoke, Dunster seemed eager to look back on "Lasso," as it drew to a close. (While no official announcement has been made about the show's future beyond Wednesday's Season 3 finale, there are no plans for more episodes or for spinoffs.) He reminisced about the casting process with a wistful glee, speaking in a tone of well-mannered English refinement that contrasts sharply with Jamie's Manchester brogue.

At the time, he said, the character of Jamie Tartt was called Dani Rojas, who was "what the character of Jamie is now, but maybe European or South American, representing where lots of footballers come from that might have a diva-y spirit." (Dani Rojas later became a separate character, a soccer-loving Pollyanna from Mexico played by Cristo Fernández.)

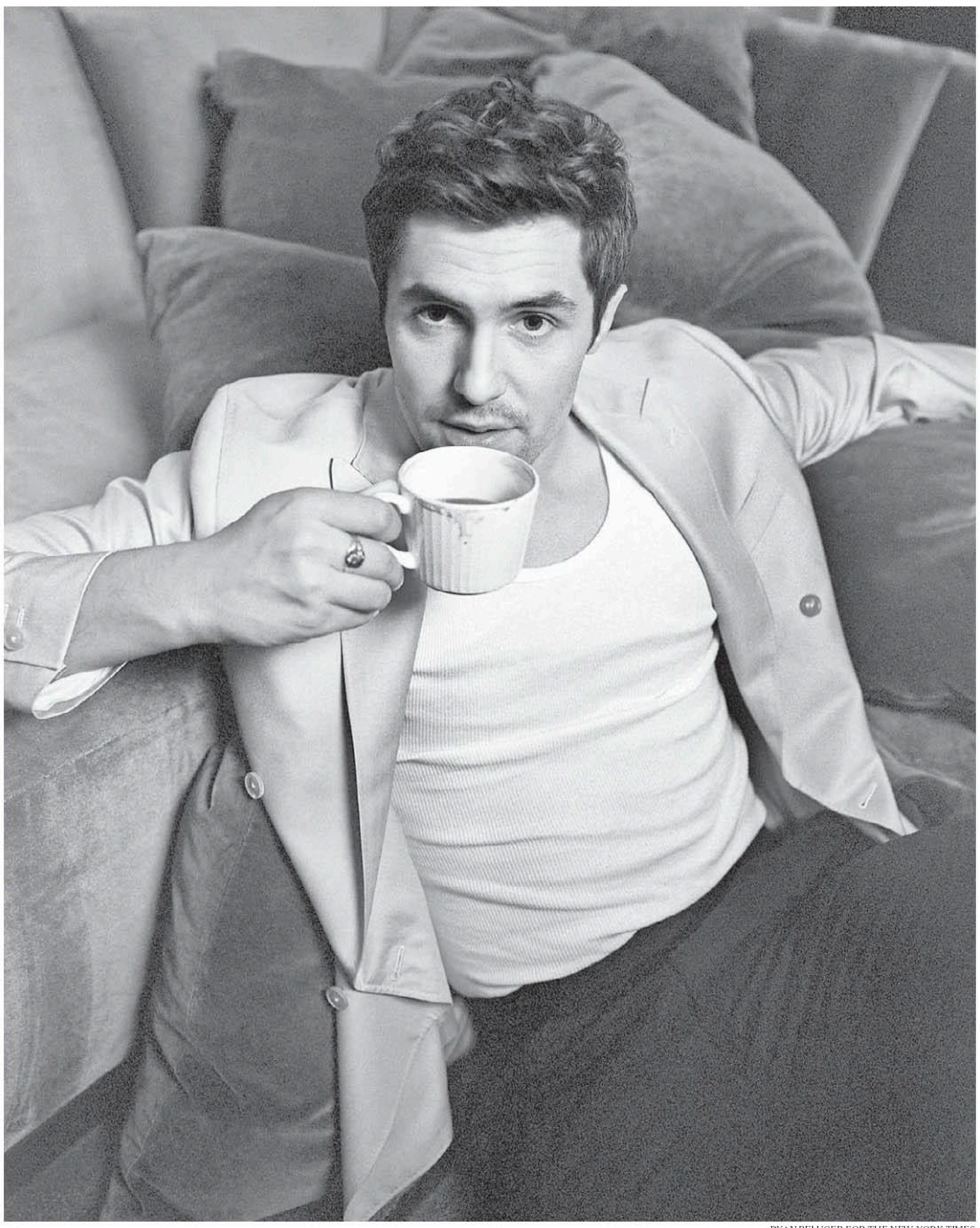
Dunster auditioned "in a sort of Spanish accent," he said, which was "not quite what they were looking for." He assumed that was the end of it. But one afternoon some time later, while playing volleyball, Dunster got a call from his agent telling him that the producers wanted him back — only this time without the Spanish.

"The note was, find an accent that would represent footballers in the U.K., that doesn't sound like me," he said. As a lifelong soccer fan, his mind went straight to Manchester — home of the vaunted Manchester United and the Premier League's current juggernaut, Manchester City. Instead of "myself," Jamie says "me-self"; "Keeley" becomes "Kee-lah."

"I did my best to make a fairly bold choice of who he was," Dunster said. "It was a pretty broad brush stroke: a fame-hungry young man with a warped idea of celebrity who thinks longevity in this industry is to be as ostentatious as he can be." He was careful, in the early going, not to soften Jamie's harsher edges too much — he had to let himself be the bad guy, at least for a while.

"It was easier to make him unlikable and trust the writing to show that he was redeemable," he said. "It's about getting out of the way of the text, isn't it?"

But his take on the character, informed by his deep soccer fandom, came to dictate much of how the character was written, he explained, right down to jokes that hinge on Dunster's twanging accent. (One of the most memorable lines in Season 3 revolves around his singular pronunciation of a colloquial term for excrement.) Sudeikis encouraged the actors to "massage the text" so that it felt right for each of them, Dunster said, "whether that was to Anglify it, or Jamiefy it, whatever it needed."



RYAN PFLUGER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



APPLE TV+

Above, Phil Dunster, who plays the soccer player Jamie Tartt on the TV show "Ted Lasso." Right, from left, Kola Bokinni, Charlie Hiscock, Dunster and Cristo Fernández on the series. When "Ted Lasso" started, Dunster says, his character was "a fame-hungry young man with a warped idea of celebrity who thinks longevity in this industry is to be as ostentatious as he can be."

Dunster, who grew up in Reading, England, was drawn to acting at an early age, appearing in school productions that won him much-sought attention in class and at home. "I don't want to put it down solely to my performance as Oliver in a Year 3 production at school, but that laid the foundation of me being a show-off," he said.

Though he comes from a military background — both his brother and father served in the armed forces — he said his family supported his decision to pursue acting professionally by enrolling at the Bristol Old Vic Theater School. This was in part because, as he dryly explained, "they also knew I had zero academic skills, so they were like, 'Yeah, mate, you've got nothing else going for you.'"

After graduating, Dunster took a job as a waiter at an Asian restaurant in Brixton, but after a single trial shift, he could tell it wasn't for him. "I flocked, man — I had someone who was looking after me, and I still managed to screw everything up," he said. On the bus ride home, he was dismayed: "I remember thinking, 'What am I doing? I can't be an actor if I have to do this.'"

Fortunately, he didn't have to: He was offered a major role in the British period gangster film "The Rise of the Krays" (2015) almost immediately afterward, and just like that, Dunster went from anxious graduate to professional actor and has worked steadily ever since.

He went on to earn notice with parts in the dark parenting comedy "Catastrophe" (2015-19) and in the Kenneth Branagh film "Murder on the Orient Express" (2017). But joining the cast of "Ted Lasso" in 2020 raised Dunster's profile to new heights as the series became a pandemic-era phenomenon, wooing audiences and critics with its sweetly comic sincerity. Yet despite the show's stratospheric stateside success, it has not gained a notable cultural foothold in Britain.

"I'm constantly telling my friends, like, 'Guys, I promise you I'm famous in America,'" Dunster joked. While he's managed to persuade them to watch the show, the overall effect of its popularity on his career has been difficult to gauge.

On the one hand, he said, "it's slightly easier to come by meetings in America than here, which is not something I take for granted." On the other, the whole notion of success and viewership at home versus abroad can be an unnecessary distraction.

"It's easy for that to be the focus rather than doing the actual work," he said. "At the end of the day, the whole point of that stuff is to hopefully aid in me doing more interesting work."

He continued: "It's an insidious thing. You can see it work its way through people — the desire to follow that stuff. It's important not to fly too close to the sun, as some Greek dude once did."

"Ted Lasso" is, above all, about goodness — about finding the goodness in others and bringing out the goodness in ourselves. That includes Jamie Tartt, who Dunster said came to be "driven by love rather than driven by hate," which he "never thought he would choose." It's perhaps unsurprising that his time on "Lasso" has taught Dunster the importance of "working with good people" — as the series wraps up, at least for now, that's what he's looking for again.

"The part can be whatever — big or small, a nice guy or a bad guy, a prime minister or the opposite of a prime minister," he said. "It doesn't really matter, as long as the people making it are good."

Record Number of Viewers For the 'Succession' Finale

By JOHN KOBLIN

The series finale of "Succession" drew 2.9 million viewers on Sunday night, a viewership high for that decorated HBO drama, the network said this week.

That audience was a considerable improvement from the Season 3 finale, which had 1.7 million viewers on the night it premiered, in December 2021. For the fourth and final season, HBO said that "Succession" was averaging 8.7 million viewers an episode, including delayed viewing, also a new high for the show.

The ratings put an exclamation point on an improbable 39-episode run for "Succession," which debuted in 2018 to modest expectations and turned into a critics' favorite and an awards show beast. In addition to several Golden Globes wins, "Succession" has won 13 Emmys, including best drama (2020 and 2022), acting honors (Jeremy Strong, Matthew Macfadyen) and best writing (three times for the show's creator, Jesse Armstrong).

Even with those highs, "Succession" remains somewhat of a niche series, particularly compared with some of HBO's other recent hits. The second season of "The White Lotus," which concluded in December, averaged 15.5 million viewers an episode, nearly double the viewers for the final season of "Succession." The second season of "Euphoria," which premiered in early 2022, averaged 19.5 million viewers. And megahits like "House of the Dragon" and "The Last of Us" averaged roughly 30 million viewers an episode, according to the network.

But "Succession" is already the early favorite to take best drama honors at this year's Emmy Awards for a third time. Shows eligible for this year's Emmys had to premiere between June 1, 2022, and May 31, 2023. Voting for the Emmy nominations begins on June 15, and the nominees will be announced in July.

The viewership figures are compiled by HBO and tallied from a combination of views from Max, HBO's streaming service, and of ratings from the live airing and repeat telecasts on traditional cable television. Many entertainment companies, like Netflix, release internal numbers to tout the popularity of their biggest series, though they are difficult to verify. During the live 9 p.m. broadcast of "Succession" on the HBO cable network, for instance, 789,000 viewers tuned in, according to Nielsen.

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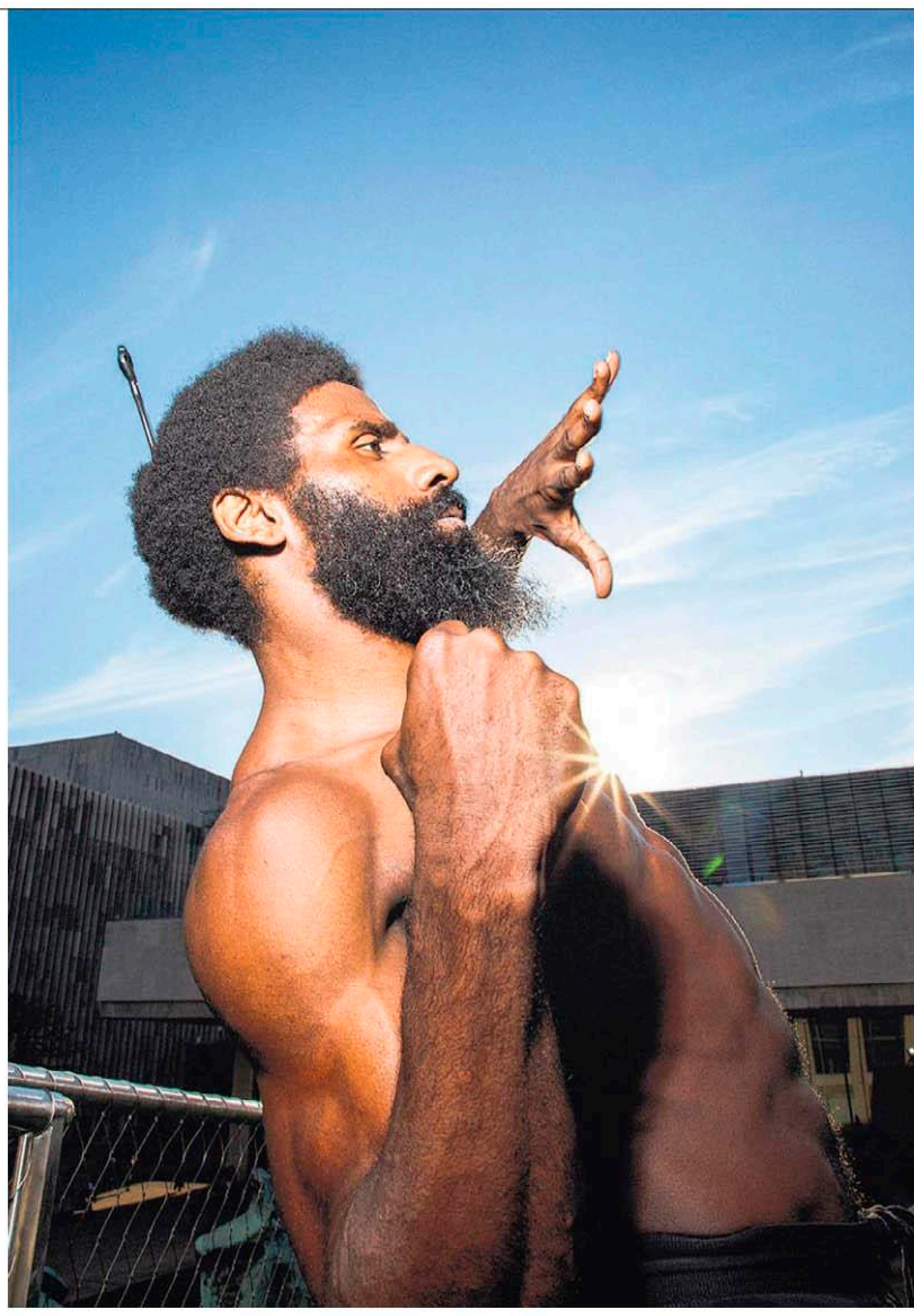
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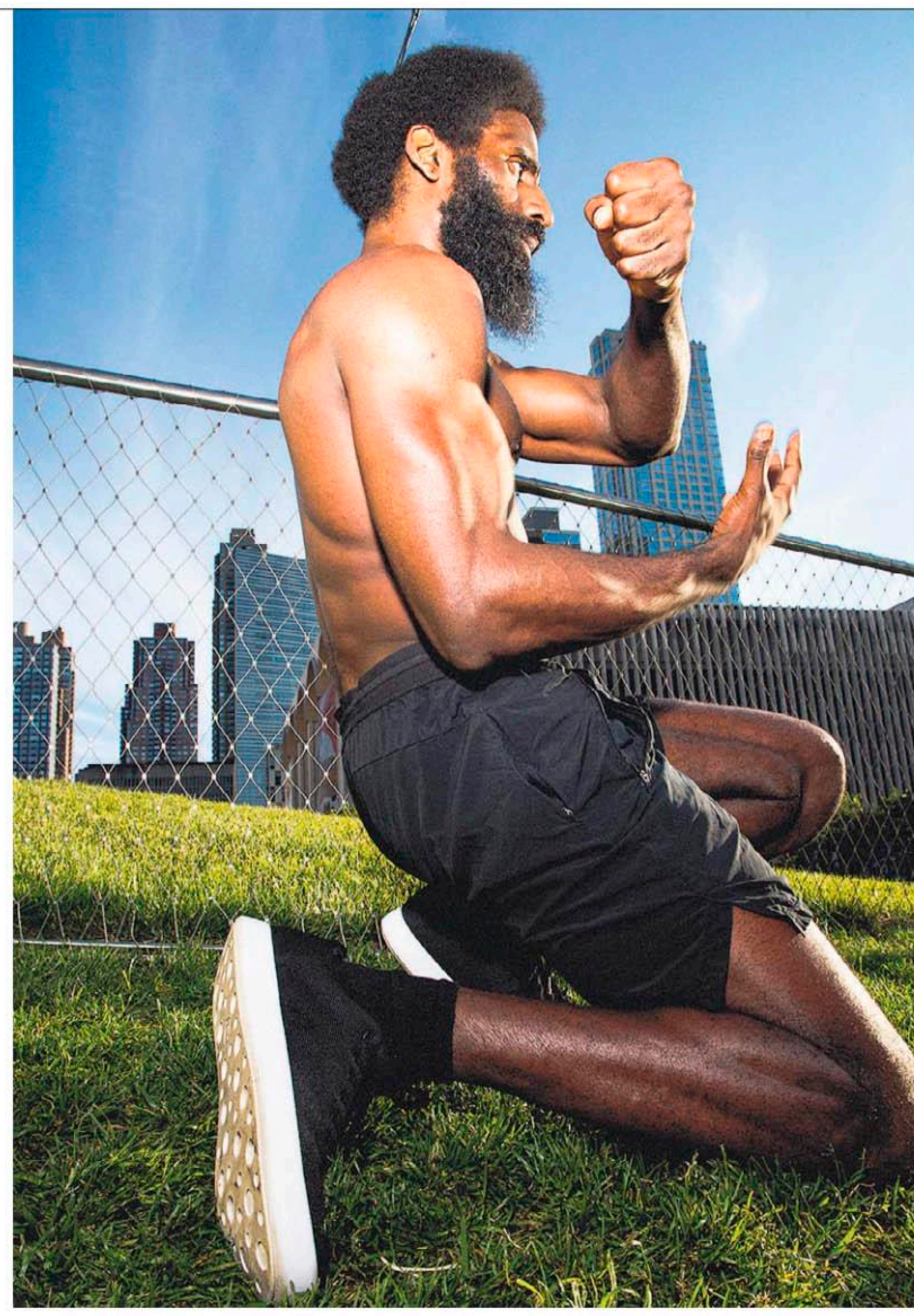
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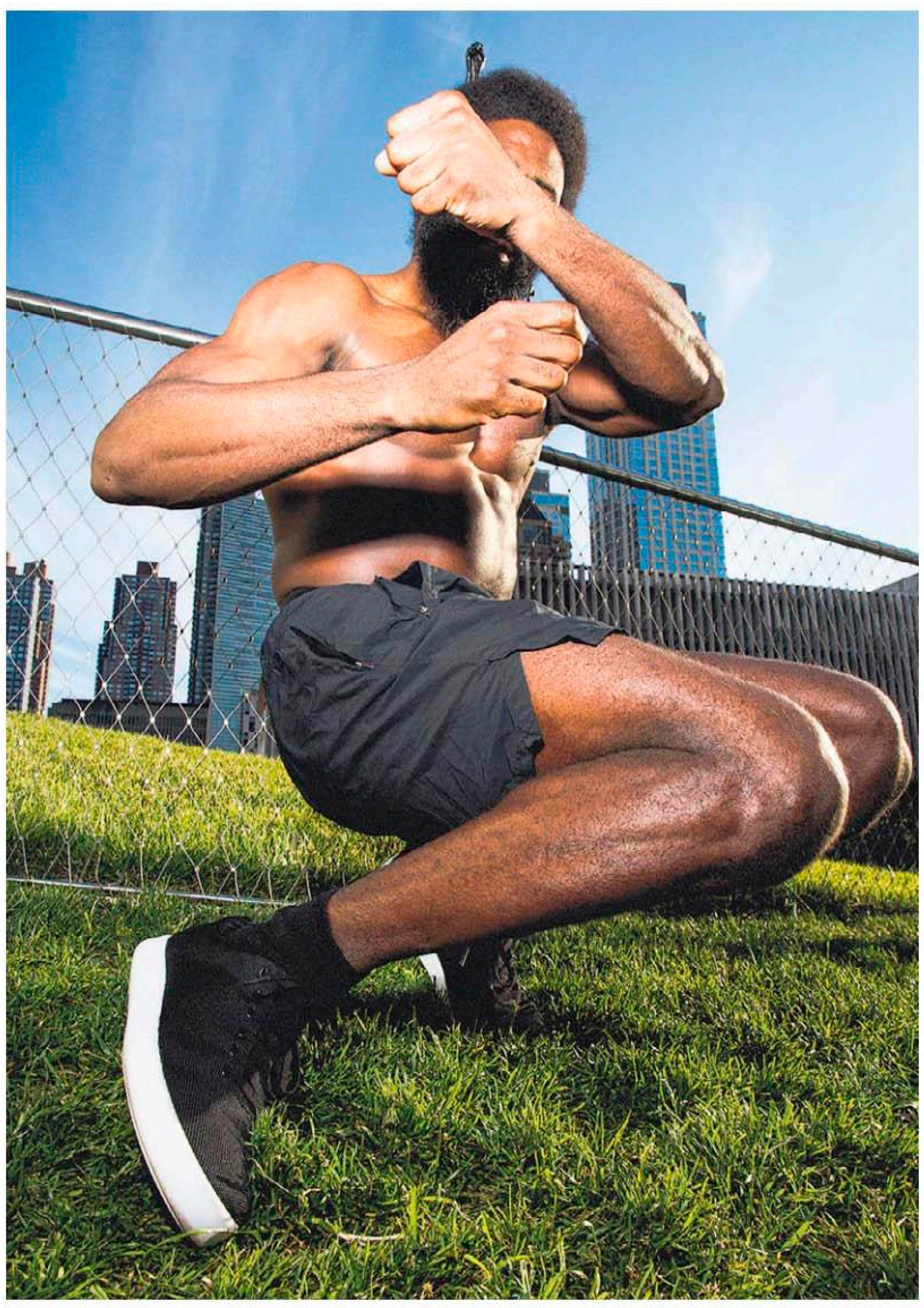
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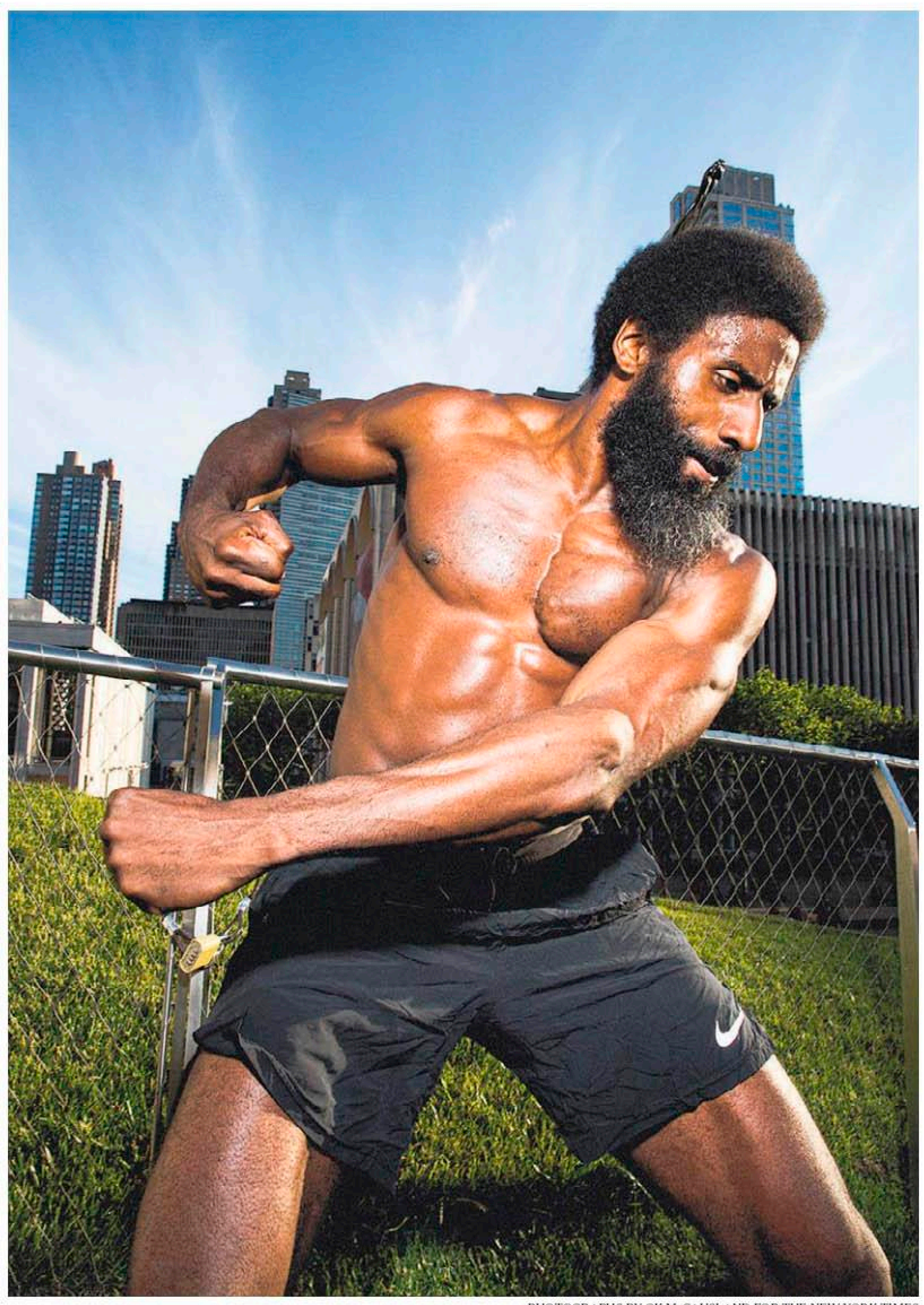
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An Inventive Dancer Lights a Path to Healing

Brian Henry, the face of krump in New York, found a kindred spirit in the choreographer Andrea Miller as they worked to create his new solo.

By BRIAN SEIBERT

Brian Henry is a dancer of biblical proportions. It's not just that he's commandingly large and muscular, with a Moses-like beard. His dancing, though rooted in the street style called krump, has an ancient gravity. Standing in profile with his chest angled forward, he could be an Assyrian sculpture. Breathing like a dragon and then opening his eyes, he could be inspirited clay, the first man.

Or that's how he appears in "song," a solo he made in collaboration with the choreographer Andrea Miller that he is performing this week during her dance company's 15th anniversary season at the Joyce Theater.

For Henry, 34, a self-described street dancer who has become the face of krump in New York, performing in a concert dance setting is an opportunity to show that krump "is a dance form to be held on the same level," he said recently.

But Henry, also known as HallowDreamz, isn't altering how he dances. "Because I'm telling a different story doesn't mean I have to step outside of my process," he said. It's just that he's used to people perceiving him one way before he dances and another way after.

Henry was speaking in Herbert Von King Park in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn, not far from where he lives and where he spent most of his youth. Most but not all. He has lived in every borough of New York City. "My mom was on drugs, and I was born with drugs in my system," he said. He was put into foster care. Later, his mother regained custody, only to lose it again because of her addiction. When he was 9 or 10, he was reunited with her in Bed-Stuy.

In 2004, he discovered krump online. The form had been established just a few years earlier in Los Angeles. It's an improvisational, in-your-face, battle-based style that mixes intense pantomime with stomping, chest-popping and emphatic arm swinging.

For Henry, the connection was instant. "It was men that looked like me," he said, "men that were aggressive, masculine, doing movements that looked like fighting. Fighting was one of the first things I learned to do, to defend myself on the walk to school and on the playground. I felt the fight, the struggle, the pain."

At the same time, he added, "it was a bunch of guys gathering for something that's positive."

"It was born out of gang culture but channeled in a way that was more spiritual, more healing," he said. "It just felt like home, but a better version."

Krump became an obsession, an escape, a discipline. Learning from online videos and DVDs, Henry worked as hard as he could to improve. And others began to notice.

"People started looking at me differently," he said. "I wasn't perceived as just a hoodlum. I was the dancer kid. It showed people I could be disciplined, that I could be good at something." This was exciting — "doors were opening, I started being welcomed into spaces where I wasn't welcomed before" — but also bittersweet. It made him realize how others had seen him before.

Henry found a few friends interested in krump, like Joshua Staton, called Nightmare, who gave him his dance name. ("He's Nightmare, I might as well be Dreamz.") They started to build a krump scene in New York. Some West Coast dancers questioned their authenticity and skill. But, Henry said, "hard-working dancers on the East Coast, like myself, have proven that we're better than a lot of the best in the West."

"My roots," he added, "are the same" as the originators of krump. But he said he valued the time when he "didn't know exactly what krump was," the years when he was on his own, copying from videos and inventing, because that experimentation "made the sauce that makes me different."

Henry's greatest affirmation came at an audition for a Madonna video around 2015, when he met Jo'Artis Ratti, known as Big Mijo, who was one of those originators — the one whose dancing people were always saying that Henry's resembled. "Mijo was like, 'Bro, I've been following you, I love your work, you're Little Mijo,'" Henry said.

Whether in Los Angeles or New York, there wasn't exactly a career path for a krump dancer. Henry had to part the waters for himself. He made a name competing in dance battles but also as a teacher. "I taught everywhere, even ballet schools," he said. (He also worked nights as a security guard and still works as a personal trainer.)

This, he said, is how he became the best-known krump dancer in New York, the go-to guy: "If you see a younger dancer, they took my class or took from a student of mine."

As for performing jobs outside the battle scene, there were lots of auditions and lots of rejection. "I just had to keep going to find where I fit," he said. He was hired for "Bitch, I'm Madonna" and other music videos. He gave a TED Talk. He created and collaborated on shows for Works & Process at the Guggenheim Museum. He's had cameos in projects at the Park Avenue Armory and the Metropolitan Museum of Art for the choreographer Bill T. Jones, who described him as "one of those unsung treasures, people who should be cynical but are not."

And now comes the collaboration with Miller. When she first encountered Henry at a benefit performance, she felt she was "in the presence of lightning and thunder," she said during a rehearsal at Juilliard. But she said she also felt a kinship: "We dance because it's part of our survival system." She wanted to work with him but worried that bringing in a street dancer could seem like a gimmick or exploitative — "cringey, I've seen it so much."

Brian Henry, a krump dancer also known as HallowDreamz, at Lincoln Center, where he was rehearsing last week with Andrea Miller's dance company.

Henry said he had had plenty of experiences like that. "They just put me next to someone doing pirouettes," he said. "Or people try to fit me into a box. And if they don't fit me into the box, I don't get to dance." His work with Miller, though, has been "an actual collaboration."

Miller agreed. "He's a thought partner, and his creativity is unlimited," she said. Much of what she supplied was a concept, an idea about the prehistoric origins of art, a frequent topic for her. While she doesn't put Henry in a box, she does frame him with wooden boards — to help viewers see what she calls his "micro-movements" and also as a canvas for the artist Sharone Halevy, who paints on the boards during the performance.

But more than framing distinguishes "song" from Henry's previous token appearances. Those, he said, were "all they gave of me." This one is "all of me."

And who is that? A devoted father of two teenagers. A mentor who creates "a safe space where men can express ourselves emotionally" and who helps teach others to "navigate through the chaos." A person who believes his most important mission is "extending what I know in life to reduce the hurt and turmoil that my people go through" — most important, that is, "next to the dance form being done damn right."

‘Mongolian Rhapsody’? A Rock What-If.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1

that she was selling the collection because she needed to put her “affairs in order.” The collection, which had been in Mercury’s London home since his death in 1991 of bronchopneumonia resulting from AIDS, includes stage costumes and furniture as well as the 15 pages of early drafts for “Bohemian Rhapsody.” On one page, Mercury wrote the words “Mongolian Rhapsody” near the top. He then crossed out that first word and added “Bohemian” above it.

The page is in an exhibition at Sotheby’s New York through June 8.

Gabriel Heaton, a books and manuscripts specialist at Sotheby’s, said in a recent interview at the auction house’s London storage facility that the drafts made it clear that

Queen, like most bands, often ‘had joke titles for things,’ an author says.

Mercury played around with lyrics when writing songs, swapping in and out words with similar sounds. “Of course, ‘Bohemian,’ ‘Mongolian,’ it’s the same rhythm,” he said of the song in question.

Almost all of the lyrics are written on stationery from a defunct British airline, British Midland, and some of the pages are festooned with Mercury’s abstract doodles. The word “Mongolian” appears nowhere else among the drafts, which are estimated to be worth up to 1.2 million pounds, or about $1.5 million.

Rock history is filled with songs that could have been. When the Beatles wrote “Yesterday,” they famously gave it the working title “Scrambled Eggs.” But the potential alternative title for “Bohemian Rhapsody” has been unknown since the song premiered almost 50 years ago, and has gone unmentioned in prominent Queen biographies.

Mark Blake, the author of several books on Queen, said in a telephone interview that the alternative title was a “fun little fact” but not surprising. Queen, like most bands, often “had joke titles for things” that were later changed, he said. The group’s “Under Pressure” with David Bowie was originally “People on Streets,” he said.

Jim Jenkins, one of Queen’s official biographers, said that he had never heard of the “Mongolian Rhapsody” idea, either, despite knowing Mercury for years. The singer “never liked to explain” his lyrics or titles, Jenkins added. “He left it to our interpretation.”

The Sotheby’s sale includes some of Mercury’s drafts for other Queen hits including “Somebody to Love,” “We Are the Champions” and “Killer Queen.” All show Mercury searching for words to make his lyrics sing, sometimes trying out multiple lines.

His changes to “Bohemian Rhapsody” are among the most striking. In the final version of the song, a verse begins with the lines:

Mama,
Just killed a man
Put a gun against his head
Pulled my trigger, now he’s dead.

But in an earlier draft, Mercury writes:

Mama,
There’s a war began
I’ve got to leave tonight
I’ve got to stand and fight.

Another page looks like a word cloud, with Mercury scrawling dozens of words and phrases including “fandango,” “thunderbolts and lighting” and “belladonna.” Heaton said that the page appeared to be Mercury trying out options for the operatic section of “Bohemian Rhapsody.”

Mercury made it clear in interviews that “Bohemian Rhapsody” was tough to write. “It didn’t just come out of thin air,” Mercury once said according to “Freddie Mercury: A Life, in His Own Words,” a collection of interview excerpts. “Certain songs require that sort of pompous flair. I had to work like crazy.”

The band’s guitarist, Brian May, and drummer, Roger Taylor, declined to comment on the “Mongolian Rhapsody” draft. In a 2002 documentary, May recalled the moment Mercury suggested the title “Bohemian Rhapsody.”

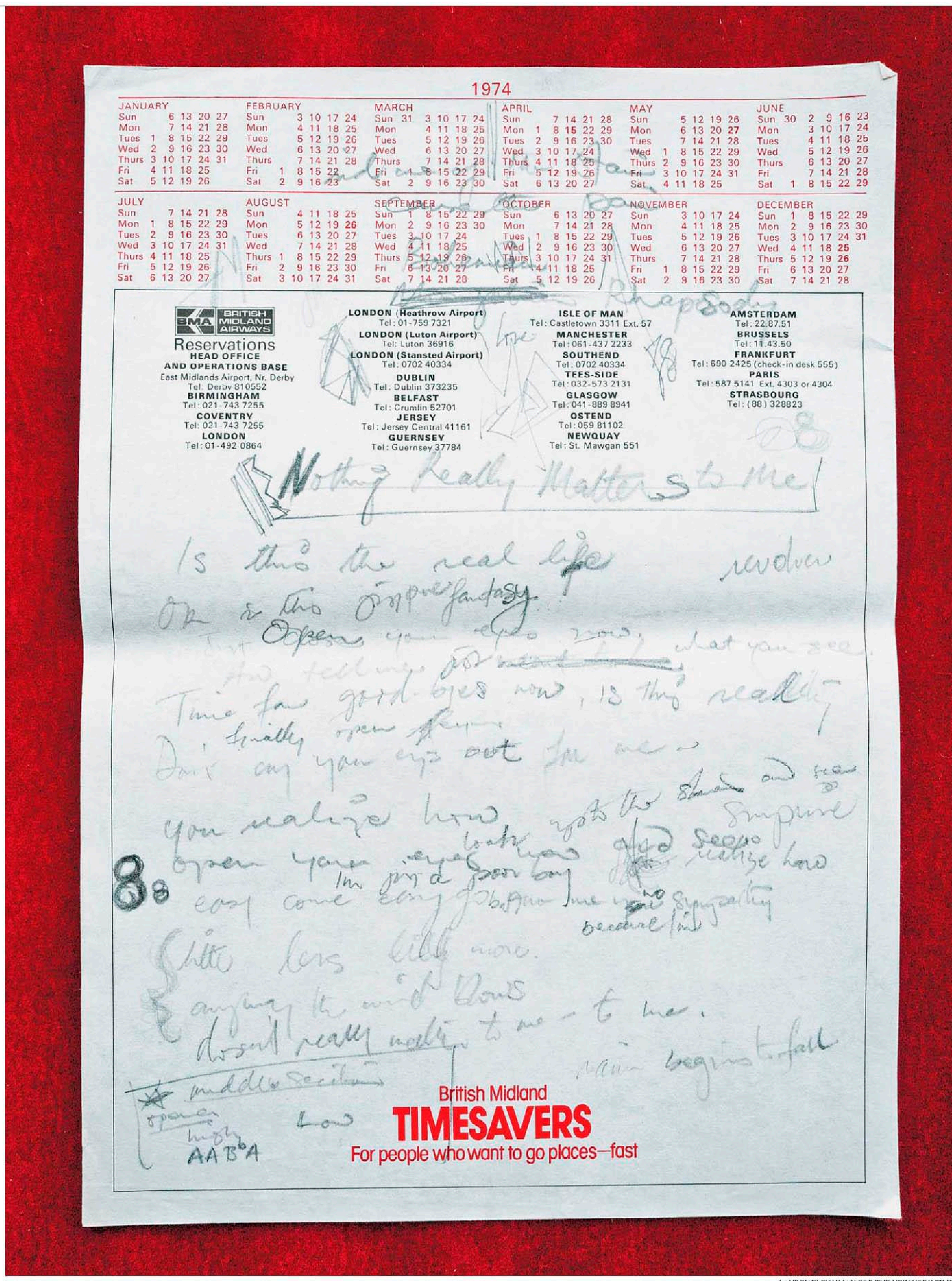
“You never knew quite whether Freddie was joking or what,” May said. “Some of his ideas turned out to be not serious, but that one stuck.”

Heaton said the final title carried a certain air of mystery to it, but it was hard to say how important it had been to the song’s success and enduring appeal.

There’s plenty of evidence of both in the forthcoming sale. The other items Sotheby’s is auctioning in September include a gold disc for “Bohemian Rhapsody,” a plaque marking the band’s Grammy nominations for the song and an MTV award presented posthumously to Mercury after the track was featured in the movie “Wayne’s World.”

Jenkins, the Queen biographer, said he was sure “Bohemian Rhapsody” would have been a hit regardless of its title, but Mercury’s final choice was better.

“I remember when it came out, wondering what a bohemian was, and looking it up,” he said.



LAUREN FLEISHMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



DENIS O’REGAN, VIA SOTHEBY’S

A draft of “Bohemian Rhapsody” with handwritten lyrics by Freddie Mercury. Left, Mercury onstage with Queen at Wembley Stadium in London in 1986. The crown and the drafts are part of a Sotheby’s sale of Mercury’s belongings, which have been at his London home since his death in 1991.

Broadway Musicians Object to David Byrne’s ‘Here Lies Love’

The show plans to use recorded instead of live music, which a union says violates its contract.

By MICHAEL PAULSON

A labor union representing musicians is challenging David Byrne’s next Broadway show, “Here Lies Love,” saying it opposes plans to stage the production with recorded instrumental tracks instead of a live band.

The musical — an immersive, dance-driven spectacle about Imelda Marcos, the former first lady of the Philippines — is scheduled to start previews on June 17 and to open on July 20 at the Broadway Theater. Byrne wrote the music with Fatboy Slim.

The musical has previously been staged Off Broadway, in London and in Seattle, each time with a singing cast accompanied by recorded music. There are a few moments in which actors have instruments as part of the action being depicted, but there are no full-time instrumentalists.

“Since ‘Here Lies Love’ was first conceived 17 years ago, every production has been performed to prerecorded track; this is part of the karaoke genre inherent to the musical and the production concept,” the production’s spokesman, Adrian Bryan-Brown, said in a statement on Tuesday. “The music for ‘Here Lies Love’ was inspired by the phenomena of ‘track acts,’ which allowed club audiences to keep dancing, much like this production aims to do.”

But Local 802 of the American Federation of Musicians says its contract with the Broadway League requires the use of 19 musicians for musicals at the Broadway Theater. (The number of musicians required under the contract varies based on theater size.)

The union says it is seeking to preserve jobs for musicians and quality for theater lovers.

“We’re not going to stand by and let this happen,” said Tino Gagliardi, the local’s president and executive director. “It’s not fair to the public.”

Since February, the producing team of “Here Lies Love,” led by Hal Luftig, has been seeking to have the show declared a “special situation,” which is a category in the labor agreement that allows for the employment of fewer musicians. The request is to be assessed by a panel that includes neutral observers as well as representatives of the Broadway League and the musicians’ union; it is not clear how long that process will take, and the ruling can be appealed to arbitration.

The League did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Tuesday, but Bryan-Brown said, “This process is ongoing and may ultimately culminate in a final and binding arbitration decision, but until that time, we will continue to work in good faith with the union to move through the steps of the contractual process.”

There have been multiple Broadway shows staged with reduced orchestra sizes over the years, but it is rare to have a musical without an orchestra at all. The best-known example was “Contact,” a dance show produced by the nonprofit Lincoln Center Theater that won the 2000 Tony Award for best musical. In 2011, the union objected to a reduced-size orchestra, along with recorded music, for the Broadway production of “Priscilla Queen of the Desert.” More recently, “The Little Prince” was staged at the Broadway Theater with music sung to recorded tracks; that show was not Tony-eligible and had a short run, so the union did not object.

The musicians say they are disappointed that the request is coming from a show associated with Byrne, whom they revere. Byrne’s last Broadway production, “American Utopia,” showcased musicians, with the band onstage playing instruments and dancing with the star.

“I was really excited that David Byrne was bringing something else to Broadway,” said Ray Cetta, a bass player and union member who has occasionally played in the band for “Chicago.” “The current situation is very surprising and disheartening. Any musician would want to work with David Byrne and bring his music to life.”

A Change of Key Jars Music Lovers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1

championed and drove its inventive programming, announced he was resigning to run the Boston Symphony Orchestra. He was one of the last remaining top deputies of Deborah Borda, who led the orchestra for 17 years, during which it reached new heights, before she left six years ago to take over the New York Philharmonic.

When Frank Gehry, the architect who designed the Los Angeles orchestra's futuristic steel-clad home, Walt Disney Concert Hall, heard the news that Smith was leaving, he initially said, quite bluntly, that he was "scared" by the double hit of departures. But he then explained that he remained hopeful, given the orchestra's track record of successful reinvention.

"I've been through it," Gehry said. "It's a moving thing that continues to grow and change. That's the way of that world. Change has been the M.O. of orchestras around the world."

Dudamel, who noted that he would remain in his post in Los Angeles for three more seasons, said he was certain the orchestra would find the right person to lead it and praised its "very, very, very solid executive team."

"I'm not even zero percent worried — even zero percent," he said.

The Los Angeles Philharmonic does have a decades-long history of finding talent. Ernest Fleischmann, who led the orchestra from 1969 to 1998, revitalized its lucrative summer programming at the Hollywood Bowl, fought to build Disney Hall and hired a young Esa-Pekka Salonen to be its music director.

Borda built on those successes, opening the hall, hiring Dudamel, fostering ties with the city and championing new music. The board exudes confidence that it will be able to find the right leadership again.

"It would have been a much bigger blow in other organizations that weren't as cohesive and well run and didn't have such an experienced team," said David Bohnett, a longtime member of its board of directors.

In truth, the Philharmonic has hardly been tested like this before. Borda, Smith and Dudamel have all helped shape the Los Angeles Philharmonic into a pioneering and revered institution. Dudamel is highly popular with his orchestra and the audience: His name on the roster at Walt Disney Hall or at the Philharmonic's summer venue, the Hollywood Bowl, assures big crowds, almost regardless of what is being played.

Last Thursday night, returning to Disney Hall for the first time since February, Dudamel walked out to shouts and cheers to conduct world premieres by Ellen Reid and Gabriella Smith, and left two hours later to a prolonged standing ovation after leading the Philharmonic in Beethoven's Seventh Symphony.

The upheaval for what the Times music critic Zachary Woolfe has described as "the most important orchestra in America" has rattled some.

"It's quite the moment," said Brian Lauritzen, the host and producer of the Los Angeles Philharmonic's nationally syndicated radio broadcasts on KUSC, a classical music station here. "There's definitely uncertainty. It's a watershed moment for the organization."

Some orchestra members said they were unnerved, too, but others — including those who have lived through such changes before — said they welcomed a new chapter.

Christopher Still, who has played the trumpet with the Los Angeles Philharmonic since 2007, said that when Salonen left, "we all thought, 'What is going to happen? Who is this kid from Venezuela?' And look what happened."

"The L.A. Phil has always been on the leading edge of taking chances," Still said. "We jump and build a helicopter after we jump. This time we are doing it without a leader."

The decision by Dudamel to leave for New York startled some in the organization, but it could hardly have come as a complete surprise. There had long been rumors that Borda, who has a close relationship with Dudamel, would try to recruit him to New York. Dudamel is 42, and will have been at the Los Angeles Philharmonic for 17 years by the time he decamps for New York, a long tenure.

Adam Nagourney and Joshua Barone reported from Los Angeles, and Javier C. Hernández from New York.



PHILIP CHEUNG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



ALEX WELSH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



EMILY BERL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The Los Angeles Philharmonic, which plays in the Walt Disney Concert Hall, above, is losing its music director, Gustavo Dudamel, far left, to the New York Philharmonic in 2026 and its chief executive, Chad Smith, left, to the Boston Symphony this fall.

'We jump and build a helicopter after we jump. This time we are doing it without a leader.'

CHRISTOPHER STILL
ORCHESTRA MEMBER

But by every account, Smith's departure was unexpected. Smith had told associates he was reluctant to commit to another five years in Los Angeles and to search for someone to replace Dudamel, with whom he was close. And he is from the East Coast, which is where his family still lives.

Some musicians said they were disappointed to see Smith go.

"I'm super-bummed Chad is leaving," said Minor L. Wetzel, a violist, calling the news "a punch in the gut."

Smith, for his part, said he did not believe he was leaving the orchestra in a vulnerable position.

"Periods of change are periods when organizations can be thoughtful and introspective about who they want to be and make decisions that are not just a continuation of what we've done," he said.

Ara Guzelimian, a longtime arts administrator, said that even though Smith's departure was a shock, it could benefit the institution in the long run.

"There is a logic to the timing, if he was beginning to feel his effectiveness and his shelf date were coming to a close," he said. "There is a kind of precise professional sell-by date where both you need renewal and the organization needs renewal. My guess is that he began to hear the professional ticking clock."

The first order of business will be to appoint a new chief executive to run the orchestra and oversee the search for a new music director. The fact that Dudamel is not leaving for three years provides some breathing room.

"They can take their time," Salonen said. "They have a very strong body of guest conductors," and Dudamel still has more seasons to go, he added. "So it's not a crisis by any means."

Thomas L. Beckmen, the chairman of the board, said a committee has been appointed to find a replacement for Smith, and that he was hopeful the search would be finished in time for Smith's successor to help choose Dudamel's successor.

It will be a challenge: Board members said there was a relatively small pool of experienced music executives to draw from.

"It isn't that deep," Beckmen said in an interview. "I started virtually looking at the top 25 orchestras in the U.S., and there's not a lot of strength. But there are a few, and I think L.A. is a pretty prestigious job these days."

But these kind of searches are always complicated and risky, given the tightly knit and competitive world of American orchestras. It took nearly a year to replace Borda — and that choice, Simon Woods, who came to Los Angeles from the Seattle Symphony, stepped down abruptly 18 months after he began. That paved the way for the appointment of Smith, who was then the chief operating officer.

"When you have leadership changes, there's anxiety and uncertainty — that's normal," said Thomas W. Morris, a veteran orchestra administrator.

Morris said the priority for the Philharmonic should be to find a chief executive "very expeditiously" to manage the transition.

"They need somebody who has a sense of what an orchestra is in relationship to a community and what an orchestra can be artistically," he said.

Some board members were optimistic, saying they expected considerable interest in the music director job.

"Look at the people that the L.A. Phil has found over the past 60 years," said Reveta Bowers, a member of the board. "The kind of diversity that exists in the L.A. market — the Philharmonic, the Hollywood Bowl, the Ford Theater, the different kinds of genres at Disney Hall. This is a dream job."

The board has appointed Daniel Song, the chief operating officer, to serve as interim chief executive. Beckmen said the board would retain a consultant to help find a permanent replacement for Smith; the new music director will be chosen, with the ratification of the board, by a committee made up of two musicians, two members of the board, and two executives from the organization.

Beckmen said the long line of successful music directors, going back half a century, made him confident about the next chapter.

"We've been very fortunate," he said. "Hopefully the sun will shine on us again."

'Pal Joey' and More Coming to City Center

By SARAH BAHR

Concert re-stagings of "Titanic," "Once Upon a Mattress" and "Jelly's Last Jam"; the unveiling of a previously announced rewrite of the Rodgers and Hart musical "Pal Joey"; and dance works by Lyon Opera Ballet and Pam Tanowitz: New York City Center has announced plans for an ambitious 2023-24 season, one in which it will celebrate its 30th Encores! series and the 20th Fall for Dance festival.

"It's a season that's equal parts hilarity, innovation and operatic scale," Lear deBessonet, the artistic director of Encores!, a concert series that revives classic and rare musicals, said on Wednesday in a news release.

City Center's gala presentation will be its adaptation of the 1940 musical "Pal Joey" (Nov. 1-5), now set in a Black community — the South Side of Chicago in the '40s — starring Ephraim Sykes as Joey Evans, a jazz singer who refuses to compromise his craft in the face of racism, and Jennifer Holliday (a Tony winner for "Dreamgirls") as a nightclub owner. The production, directed by Tony Goldwyn and Savion Glover with a new book by Richard LaGravenese and Daniel Beaty, will also feature Aisha Jackson ("Once Upon a One More Time") and Elizabeth Stanley ("Jagged Little Pill").

"Pal Joey" originally featured white characters; in 2021, the producer Jeffrey Richards said he would bring this re-conceived version to Broadway during the 2022-23 season, which just ended without the show. Now the delayed production will have a City Center run instead — and after that, who knows? Two of this season's Tony-nominated musical revivals, "Into the Woods" and "Parade," started at City Center.

City Center's season will begin with its 20th Fall for Dance festival (Sept. 27-Oct. 8), which will include a collaboration between Sara Mearns of City Ballet, the choreographer Bobbi Jene Smith and the bass-baritone Davóne Tines, presented with Vail Dance Festival; as well as the premiere of a work by the street dance artist Ephrat Asherie and the tap dancer Michelle Dorrance. The two-week festival will also include performances by Birmingham Royal Ballet, led by the director Carlos Acosta, and by Bijayini Satpathy, an interpreter of the classical Indian dance form Odissi.

In January, the main Encores! series begins with "Once Upon a Mattress," the 1959 musical comedy adaptation of the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale "The Princess and the Pea" with music by Mary Rodgers, lyrics by Marshall Barer, and a book by Jay Thompson, Dean Fuller and Barer. Sutton Foster ("Anything Goes," "The Music Man") stars as the brassy, lovable Princess Winnifred the Woebegone, the part that made Carol Burnett a star in 1959. DeBessonet will direct a new concert adaptation (Jan. 24-28) by Amy Sherman-Palladino, the creator of the television series "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel."

It will be followed by "Jelly's Last Jam," the 1992 Broadway musical about the life of the jazz pioneer Jelly Roll Morton, with a book by George C. Wolfe, lyrics by Susan Birkenhead and music by Morton and Luther Henderson (Feb. 21-25). The original production won three Tony Awards, including best lead actor for Gregory Hines and best featured actress for Tonya Pinkins. It will be directed by Robert O'Hara, with casting to be announced.

The series will conclude with a revival of Peter Stone and Maury Yeston's 1997 musical "Titanic," which recounts the 20th century's most famous maritime disaster (June 12-16). The original production (no connection to James Cameron's 1997 film) won five Tony Awards, including best musical, but has never received a Broadway revival. It will be directed by Anne Kauffman, with casting to be announced.

City Center's lineup also includes several dance offerings, among them Lyon Opera Ballet in "Dance," the choreographer Lucinda Childs's 1979 collaboration with the composer Philip Glass and the conceptual artist Sol LeWitt (Oct. 19-21); as well as the choreographer Pam Tanowitz's "Song of Songs," which fuses David Lang's choral settings of the biblical poem with movement inspired by Jewish folk dance (Nov. 9-11).

To close out the year, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, the center's resident dance company, will celebrate its 65th anniversary with a season (Nov. 29-Dec. 31) that includes Ronald K. Brown's "Dancing Spirit," a 2009 work mixing African diaspora and American modern dance styles.



MARIA BARANOVA

Melissa Toogood and Zachary Gonder in "Song of Songs," a work by the choreographer Pam Tanowitz and the composer David Lang that is coming to City Center in November.


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It's Showtime At Fashion High

The student body makes a statement with a sassy, head-turning event.

BY ALEX VADUKUL | PAGE 5

GUS ARONSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Jamira Esquilin, with her makeup already started, preparing for the big showcase for the High School of Fashion Industries last week in Manhattan.



YOLANDA HOSKEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Geena Rocero, who said she never felt fully comfortable as a trans role model.

She Rewrote the Trans Narrative

The model and memoirist Geena Rocero on the 'trap' of respectability politics and more.

By SHANE O'NEILL

Geena Rocero can stop traffic. This is more than a metaphor.

On a recent Saturday in Manhattan, she confidently stomped into West 34th Street, giving a shrug and a wave to a braking car before getting into a Lyft.

"I've counted: I can stop three lanes," she said. "Not four."

Ms. Rocero, 39, has honed the skill of attracting and deflecting attention throughout her extraordinary career, recounted in her new memoir, "Horse Barbie," published this week. The book has blurbs from Gabrielle Union-Wade, Ronan Farrow, America Ferrera and Jia Tolentino.

In the late 1990s, beginning at 15, Ms. Rocero was a beauty queen working the transgender pageant circuit in the Philippines, where shows are broadcast on national television. Her victories earned her both money and fame. She said her signature wig style — a side bang and a flipped end — became a trend unto itself among fellow beauty contestants.

At 17, she moved to San Francisco, where she worked at the Benefit Cosmetics makeup counter at Macy's. "Almost every single counter has a trans Filipino working there," Ms. Rocero said. "That's where I found my trans Filipino family."

It's also where she met a model who

CONTINUED ON PAGE D6

UNBUTTONED | VANESSA FRIEDMAN

Balenciaga's Uncanceling Strategy Is Working

The brand taps power players to emerge from disgrace. Now it just has to reclaim its buzz.

DEMNA, THE MONONYMIC DESIGNER of Balenciaga, that former harbinger of all things haute and cool that experienced a highly public fall from grace last winter, simply cannot resist a visual metaphor. His collections became famous as comments on the world around us and then infamous: He sent refugees trudging through a maelstrom after Russia invaded Ukraine; fetishized capitalism in the New York Stock Exchange; and then veered uncomfortably close to associating children with S&M when he posed a youngster amid adult "toys," reminding the watching world that those who thrive by the viral image risk dying by it.

So what does it say that his resort collection, released digitally on Tuesday, features models emerging from the vaulted wooden doors of the Balenciaga headquarters, walking back into the world in their shoulder pads, hoodies and beaded gowns, only to be doused by a sudden downpour?

Coming three days after the end of a Cannes Film Festival in which more Balenciaga appeared on the red carpet than it had since November, the message is pretty clear: Balenciaga is in the midst of its comeback, baby.

Welcome to the next stage of the Return. Or, as Mosha Lundström Halbert called it on TikTok, the "Balenciagassance." If the Balenciaga powers that be can pull it off, they will have added a new chapter to the story of early 21st-century cancel culture, becoming not just a case study on mismanagement in a crisis, but one on how to strategize a recovery without the public defenestration of the decision makers involved.

As you may remember, the erstwhile hottest brand in the world fell into disrepute after a troika of events — its close relationship with Ye before his turn toward public antisemitism and racism; and a pair of ad campaigns that viewers claimed promoted pedophilia — had it teetering on the brink of disaster. Balenciaga products were burned on social media; Kim Kardashian condemned the choices; sales during the crucial holiday period dipped markedly. Even in a fashion world regularly troubled by problems with appropriation and offense, the situation was extreme.

Caught up in a whirlwind of public opprobrium, Demna and the brand's executives seemed unsure how to react, before finally offering up statements of public apologies and self-recrimination. Then, after what seemed like a self-imposed timeout, they came tiptoeing out of the shadows with a show in February: a stripped-down march of the penitents involving no sets or social commentary, just clothes.

But then came the Met Gala and Demna's first major public appearance, albeit one in a fashion safe space, where he hosted a table for young designers who could not afford their own tickets. Then came Cannes and the return of red carpet names to the fold.

It was clear that a master plan of sorts was unfolding. One that was tactical and considered and with some of fashion's most influential power players carefully pulling public strings.

Anna Wintour, for example, who very deliberately invited Demna to the Met and who has made something of a personal cause of second chances: masterminding John Galliano's return to fashion after he was fired from Dior because of a drug-and-alcohol-fueled antisemitic rant, as well as supporting Georgina Chapman after the crimes of her husband at the time, Harvey Weinstein, tarnished her brand, Marchesa. Indeed, Ms. Wintour said, she was "thrilled" to have Demna attend the Met, citing his "sincere" apologies and commitment "to making changes at the house."

"I've always thought part of owning up to one's mistakes is to not hide away, but to be honest — and go out and face the world," she said.

Her embrace sent a signal to the rest of the fashion world, as did the fact that François-Henri Pinault, the billionaire chief executive of Kering, the luxury conglomerate that owns Balenciaga, wore a Balenciaga tuxedo to the Met rather than one of his many other brands, such as Saint Laurent, Gucci or Brioni. It was a public sign of his commitment to the brand and its designer.

Mr. Pinault doubled down on his support at Cannes, once again wearing Balenciaga "on purpose," he said. And it wasn't just Mr. Pinault: His wife, Salma Hayek Pinault, also wore Balenciaga, as did Michelle Yeoh, Isabelle Huppert, Alton Mason and the French singer Yseult, in red carpet images that would be captured and sent around the world, putting their brand equity where Balenciaga's was.

As to why, Cédric Charbit, Balenciaga's chief executive, said they were all wearing custom looks and "that happens through long-term relationships."

"It's not an overnight process, and it needs to be meaningful," he said. Suggesting, again, that the decisions were planned gestures of affirmation.

Just as the chosen venue seemed a carefully calibrated choice, given that an equally if not more controversial return — that of Johnny Depp to the big screen — also took place at Cannes, effectively paving the way. (Also, the brouhaha over Balenciaga had always been lower in Europe than it was in the United States, so it made sense to start the comeback there.)

Admittedly, when pictures of Ms. Yeoh and Co. in their Balenciagas appeared, there were a few social media comments taking them to task, but any negative reaction was far outweighed by the fire emojis. Overall, backlash was almost nonexistent. Diet Prada issued not a peep.

The outrage mob had, it seems, moved on. Luca Solca, a luxury goods market analyst, compared the Balenciaga situation to the Gucci "blackface difficulty" of 2019. "We have seen in the past that media mishaps have an impact for two to three quarters and then normalize," he said. He added that he expected Balenciaga to be "home and dry by the second half of 2023."

Now the question is whether Balenciaga can recapture the buzz and sales it generated before its crisis, a more complicated conjuring trick to pull off. It is one that requires the alchemical combination of products and desire that Demna once generated by upending all expectations and challenging stale ideas of "beauty" and "luxury."

While the cruise collection had some of that embedded within its signature oversize suits, puffer opera trenches and diva gowns — "drawstring" bags that looked like the string bags used to tote grocery produce; "towel" wrap skirts that looked like bathroom towels — such pieces no longer seem that revolutionary. Like the ready-to-wear collection in March, they're familiar.

That's OK. As Hermès has proved, there is profit in consistency, if not excitement. And Demna can create truly gorgeous, sophisticated clothes, with the purity of line synonymous with the house. See one fan-pleated silk dress with winged sleeves that simultaneously suggests the body while framing it like a bas-relief. But the magic that was once there, that sense of gleeful, liberating, absurdist challenge?

That still hasn't come back.



VITTORIO ZUNINO CELOTTO/GETTY IMAGES



LEFT, JOEL C RYAN/INVISION, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS; CENTER AND RIGHT, KRISTY SPAROW/GETTY IMAGES

Above, the actor Alton Mason on the red carpet at the Cannes Film Festival in May. From left: the actors Isabelle Huppert and Michelle Yeoh and the singer Yseult in Cannes.





LEFT AND ABOVE, BALENCIAGA

Looks from Balenciaga's 2024 resort collection, including a fan-pleated silk dress with winged sleeves, right.

CORRECTION

An article last Thursday on the new documentary on Mary Tyler Moore, "Being Mary Tyler Moore," misstated the year when "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" ended. It was 1977, not 1976.



People Places Things

HIGHLIGHTS FROM TMAGAZINE.COM





PHOTOGRAPHS BY SHINA PENG

Above left, the designer Busayo Olupona. Above right (from left), Tolu Olupona, Daàpo Reo, Oluwaseye Olusa, Lisa Thompson, Ms. Olupona, Camille Okhio and Yemi Amu for a dinner party at Dept of Culture in Brooklyn.

ENTERTAINING WITH

The Designer Busayo Olupona Celebrates an Anniversary

In 2010, Busayo Olupona was working as a corporate finance lawyer in New York City when she began making dresses from traditional African textiles, both as a creative outlet and as a way to connect with her heritage. Ms. Olupona, who was born in Boston, lived in Ile-Ife, a city in the southwest of Nigeria, until she was 11, when her family moved to Davis, Calif., for her father's job teaching African Religion at the University of California, Davis. In 2013, she decided to turn her hobby into a business, starting Busayo, a collection of full-skirt dresses, voluminous pants and puff-sleeve tops, all produced in the country where she spent her childhood.

Known for her love of bright color combinations — think raspberry with tangerine, eggplant with sky blue — Ms. Olupona, 43, now travels to the Nigerian cities Abeokuta, Lagos and Osogbo several times a year to work with local artisans. Over the past decade, her designs have been spotted on celebrities like Lupita Nyong'o and Gwyneth Paltrow, and picked up by luxury retailers including Neiman Marcus and Moda Operandi. When she's home in Brownsville, Brooklyn, Ms. Olupona jumps at any opportunity to host a gathering. "Nigerians love a good party," she said, recalling childhood memories of her parents and their friends dancing to the jùjú music by Shina Peters and King Sunny Ade, dressed up in Nigerian lace and head wraps. "We celebrate everything," she said.

On a chilly Monday evening in March, Ms. Olupona had two happy occasions to toast: the 10th anniversary of her fashion label as well as her recent award from the 15 Percent Pledge, a nonprofit that supports Black-owned brands. Rather than host at home, she decided to treat her friends and supporters of her company to dinner at Dept of Culture, the Nigerian restaurant in Bedford-Stuyvesant that was just named a James Beard finalist for best new restaurant. As the sun set, 15 guests — including the actresses Adepero Oduye and Zainab Jah; the playwright Tracey Scott Wilson; the visual artist Daàpo Reo; and Yemi Amu, the founder of the Brooklyn hydroponic farm Oko — showed up to sample the chef Ayo Balogun's inventive take on North-Central Nigerian cuisine.

Before the meal, Ms. Olupona placed a bottle of Ogogoro — or palm liquor — in the center of the table. Nearly impossible to buy in the United States, it was a souvenir from her most recent trip to Nigeria. As the guests sipped from miniature glasses, sighing with satisfaction, Mr. Balogun began with his version of Nigerian pepper soup, using snapper as a base rather than the traditional snails. Next came asaro: a porridge of sweet white yams, tomatoes, red bell peppers, habanero chiles and onions, to which Mr. Balogun added smoked shrimp and crayfish. The meal's main event was another staple of Nigerian home cooking: pounded yam and egusi soup. While the two are typically served in separate dishes, Mr. Balogun poured the egusi — a stew of ground melon seeds, spinach, chicken or beef stock, ground crayfish, onion and peppers — over the pounded yam, resulting in a dish that required a fork and a spoon. (Nigerians typically eat this with their hands, rolling up little balls of the yam, indenting them with their thumbs, and filling them with a bit of soup.) Dessert was dodo (fried plantain) with vanilla ice cream, a childhood favorite of Mr. Balogun's.

Ms. Olupona was happy to see the table full of used plates and crumpled napkins after the meal: "Generally, if things look too orderly at the end of a party, I worry," she said. "I want some chaos! Empty food trays, empty cups everywhere, people delirious with joy." Not ready to call it a night, the designer and at least half of the guests continued the party, walking a couple of blocks up Nostrand Avenue to Paul's, a neighborhood bar that Ms. Olupona appreciates for its "low-key, non-pretentious" feel. For the complete article, tmagazine.com. *CAMILLE OKHIO*





Above left, dodo, or fried plantain. Above right, egusi soup poured over pounded yam.

THIRD WHEEL | GINA CHERELUS

His Football Card Didn't Get in the Way

A slight hitch when they moved on from long phone calls to exchanging photos.

AFTER RECONNECTING VIA long-distance phone calls in the early 1990s, Tommi Vincent and Troy Vincent Sr., who had met a few years earlier in Trenton, N.J., decided it was time to exchange photos of each other through the mail.

At the time, Mr. Vincent was a 22-year-old cornerback for the Miami Dolphins.

"I sent her a football card because that's the only picture I had of myself," said Mr. Vincent, 52, now the N.F.L.'s executive vice president for football operations. "Back then you couldn't FaceTime."

Ms. Vincent, a life coach and chef who back then was an 18-year-old college student at Temple University, wasn't immediately impressed by the gesture.

"That wasn't personal enough for me," she said.

The two continued their daily phone calls for months, however. And after a few visits, a promise ring and an engagement, they married in 1994. Five children and six grandchildren later, they recalled the moment they knew.

This interview has been lightly edited and condensed.

How did you two meet?

TROY VINCENT SR. I was in high school, Tommi was in middle school. Tommi's older sister was dating my best friend and that's how I met the family.

TOMMI VINCENT We weren't dating back then, just to be clear. There's a four-year age difference, so at that time, I met Troy hanging out with my sister and her friends, and I didn't think they were cool at all. And then, fast-forward, my sister ended up marrying the gentleman, and they were visiting Troy, and he inquired about me.



JEFF LEWIS/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Troy Vincent Sr. and Tommi Vincent in Long Beach, Calif., last year. They now have five children and six grandchildren.

TROY They were on a Disney cruise coming through the state of Florida, where I was living. I said, "Show me a picture."

You called her first after that?

TROY Talk about running somebody down. It was like she didn't even want to talk to me. So not only did I call her first, I would not stop calling.

TOMMI Troy is an old soul, God bless him, and his first phone call to me was at 6 a.m. I was out partying until 4:30 in the morning. So when he first called, I'm like, "What?"

TROY She picked up eventually, though.

TOMMI I did have a perception of him because he was a professional athlete. In my mind I was like: He probably a dog. So I had my college roommate at the time screening the calls. The one time that I did pick up, it was raining and my girlfriend wasn't there. And on that phone call we stayed on the phone from 3 in the afternoon until the next morning.

So you exchanged photos of yourselves after a few phone calls. How did she get the football card?

TROY I mailed it, right?

TOMMI You had Linda mail it — his godmom. Like she was his assistant.

TROY It was literally a football card in an envelope with a 25-cent stamp.

By 2023 standards, that feels like a lot of effort.

TOMMI At this point, I had already caught feelings for him, so I when I got the card I was extremely annoyed, because I didn't feel what you're calling "effort." I was like: You're going to send me a football card, and I'm sending you a picture?

TROY I didn't know if she still looked like the picture that I saw, because it was an old picture. But it didn't matter because at that time, I fell in love with the person who I was on the phone with every day.

When did you both meet in person?

TROY Maybe about five or six months later. I was up in Jersey and I said, "Let's go out to dinner."

TOMMI Troy was playing the Jets, and he was like, "Hey, why don't you come out to the game?" All I had was the football card, so in my mind I'm like: I don't even think I'm going to know who this is when I see him. He walked into the hotel and we saw each other and smiled. And then, a couple of days later, he got me an airline ticket to come fly out to Florida to spend a couple of days with him.

Was there a moment during your phone calls that you knew this was the person for you?

TROY None in particular. I think just over time. Outside of my line of work, I was not spending much time with another individual. I'm getting up on the phone, we're talking. On my breaks, we're talking. Going to sleep, we're talking. It was like, she like my homie. I'm now sharing with her everything about my life, and it was just what the doctor ordered.

TOMMI I would say about three months into our relationship — and I hadn't shared it with anybody — but I had this feeling inside of me that was indescribable. I just knew that I wanted him to be my husband, but I felt like I would sound like a fool if I had expressed that three months into our relationship. We continued to build on the relationship and experiencing intimacy over the phone, which really allowed us to get to know each other in ways beyond.

The Mustache Is Back, in Its Many Incarnations

A bit of masculine swagger with style and intentionality.

By SHIRA TELUSHKIN

About six months ago, Micah Fitzerman-Blue, a screenwriter in Los Angeles, was shaving his beard when he reached the region between his nose and his upper lip and thought, "What if I just stopped?"

"I was self-conscious, at first, because I hadn't ever worn just a mustache," he said. But after confirming that his wife didn't hate it, and realizing how commonplace they had become in his Echo Park neighborhood, he embraced the look. "I turned 40 this year, and I have two young kids, and it makes me feel more like a dad, but a fun dad," he said.

He is scarcely alone. The mustache, capable of evoking everything from rugged masculinity to whimsical irony to earnest fatherly cheer, is enjoying one of its periodic renaissances.

"I'll be on the subway sometime, and I'll look around and five other people in a 10-foot radius will have mustaches," said Jimmy Brewer, 27, an actor in New York, who grew out his mustache while on vacation seven months ago. He then landed a part in the ensemble of the Broadway musical "Shucked" and was asked to keep it through the end of his contract. "I've always admired them on other people because it looks like people that wear them are more confident in themselves," he said.

Though it's hard to separate data about mustaches from data about facial hair trends more generally, those in the industry say that the rise is pronounced and recent. Once the domain of the creeper, porn star, countercultural icon or out-of-fashion uncle, the mustache is becoming just another option for facial hair.

There are many reasons. The mustache is masculine but playful in a world enjoying new ways of engaging with gendered styles. It was poised for a comeback after a decade of everyone having beards anyway, and quarantine allowed scads of people to give it a try and realize they liked it.

"It started to gain a lot more momentum in the last year, especially since 'Top Gun' came out," said Matty Conrad, who runs several barbershops in Vancouver, British Columbia, as well as a popular YouTube channel dedicated to facial hair grooming. "I think the mustache today is where beards were in 2010. But if it ends up having that staying power, then the people who turned to it for the wow factor will begin to look elsewhere."

Nicky Austin, the hair and makeup stylist responsible for maintaining the iconic Ted Lasso 'stache, attributes the rise in mustaches among her clients in Los Angeles to the pervasiveness of beard culture, as well as a new openness to grooming.

"I know men who see their barber every weekend to keep their fades looking fresh, which would have been unheard-of 20 years ago," she said, adding that those experiencing male-pattern baldness often find mustaches a style game-changer.

The attention is also part of the fun. Christian Illuzzi, an artist in Ridgewood, Queens, has been shocked by the attention his mustache receives. He has worn a beard since he was a student at the Fashion Institute of Technology in the 2010s, and only adopted his full mustache in the past few weeks.

"I've gotten compliments before, but never as much as on my mustache," Mr. Illuzzi, said, echoing the experiences of others. "Guys on the street will say, 'Hey, awesome mustache.'"

Mustaches became more common in queer spaces around the end of the 2010s, especially thin ones that complemented the manicured, Tom of Finland leather-and-harnesses sexual aesthetic that reigned. And they could have stayed on the edge of mainstream popularity if the pandemic had not hit. During that time, men began to transition from beards to stand-alone mustaches, bringing others along with them.

"Quarantine definitely liberated me from having to deal with that awkward middle phase, which always kept me from growing one," said Lucas Johnson, an English teacher in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, who grew out his thick, wide, chevron-style mustache two years ago. "As someone in my late 20s, it's been this nice way of feeling fashionable while still feeling like I'm ascending into more mature adulthood."

He also appreciates its versatile associations. "The mustache connotes authority, but also suggests a certain amount of silliness," he said. "It's very masculine, but it's also very flamboyant and quietly sort of queer-coded. The entire gender spectrum is obsessed with my mustache, as am I."

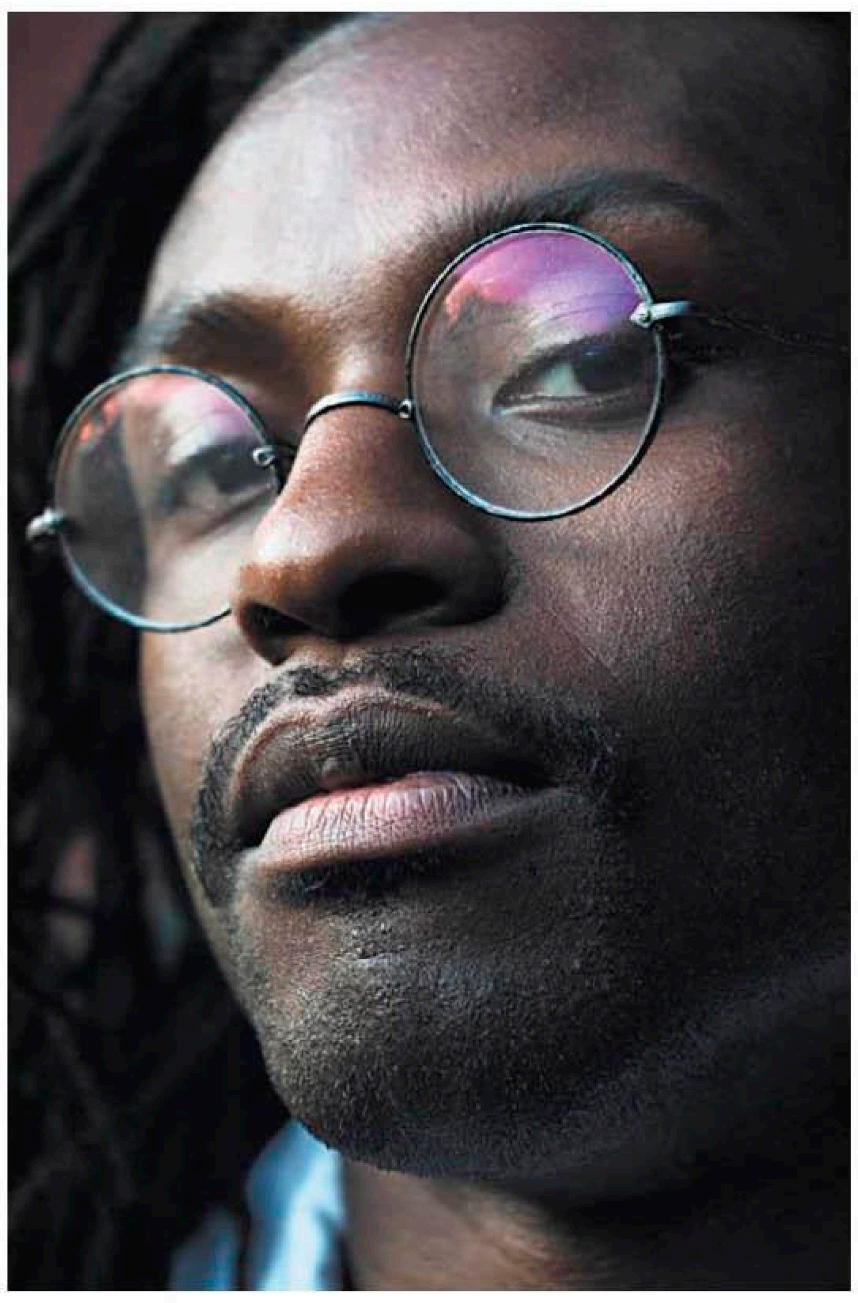
The mustache's popularity has always been particularly susceptible to cultural icons and trends of the moment. In the early 1900s, mustaches were often elaborate, like the bushy walrus style of Theodore Roosevelt or the waxed ends of the English mustache (think Archduke Franz Ferdinand), ironically if briefly revived in the early aughts by suspender-wearing hipsters across America.

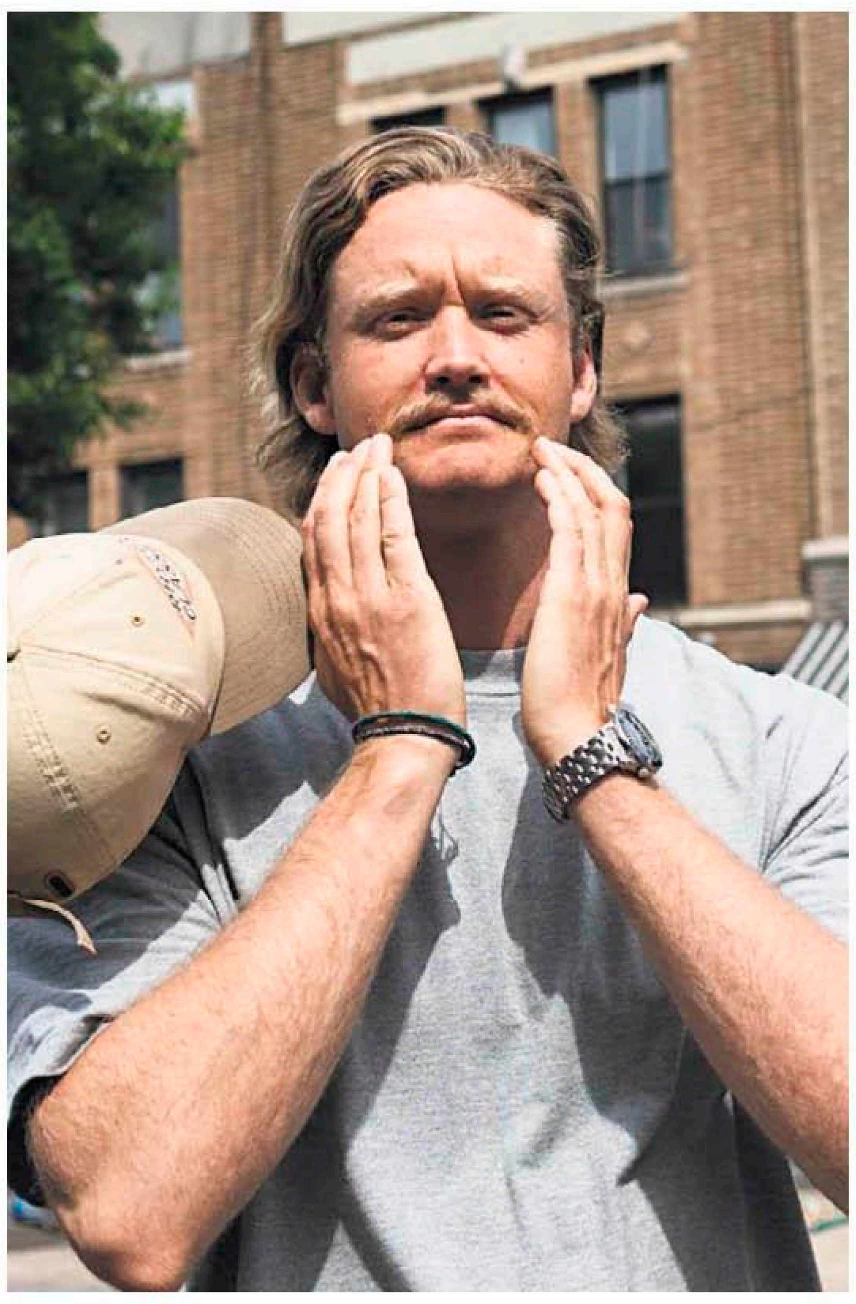
Until 1916, British soldiers were actually forbidden to shave their upper lip, perhaps because of the mustache's deep associations with virility and strength.

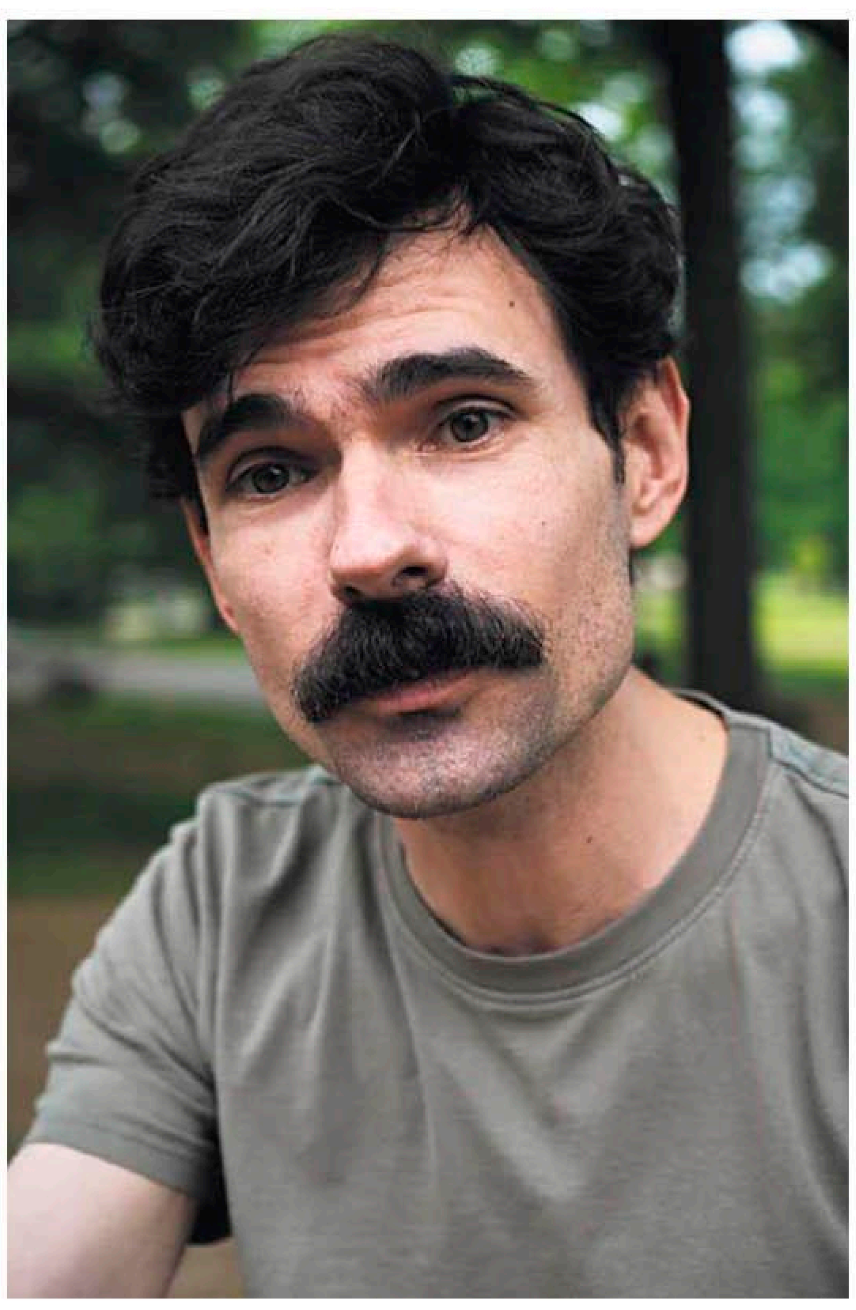
More contrived styles were also an easy target for mockery. Charlie Chaplin's toothbrush mustache, that small patch above his lip, was adopted specifically for its humorous appeal, before becoming associated with Hitler and forever losing its place in the fashion cycle.

After the cleanshaven 1950s, the mustache became the countercultural facial hair of choice for myriad groups considered subversive — longhaired hippies, Marxists, gay men. Freddie Mercury wore one of the most iconic mustaches of the century.

As the sharp style division between mainstream and counterculture began to blur in the 1970s and '80s, the mustache came to be associated with a masculine swagger and was found on the faces of Burt Reynolds, Tom Selleck, Sam Elliott and others. Not everyone could pull it off, which was always part of its appeal, but these hypermasculine associations lent themselves to exaggeration, and the mustache was playfully adopted in queer culture. It also became widespread throughout the porn industry, giving it the whiff of degeneracy.



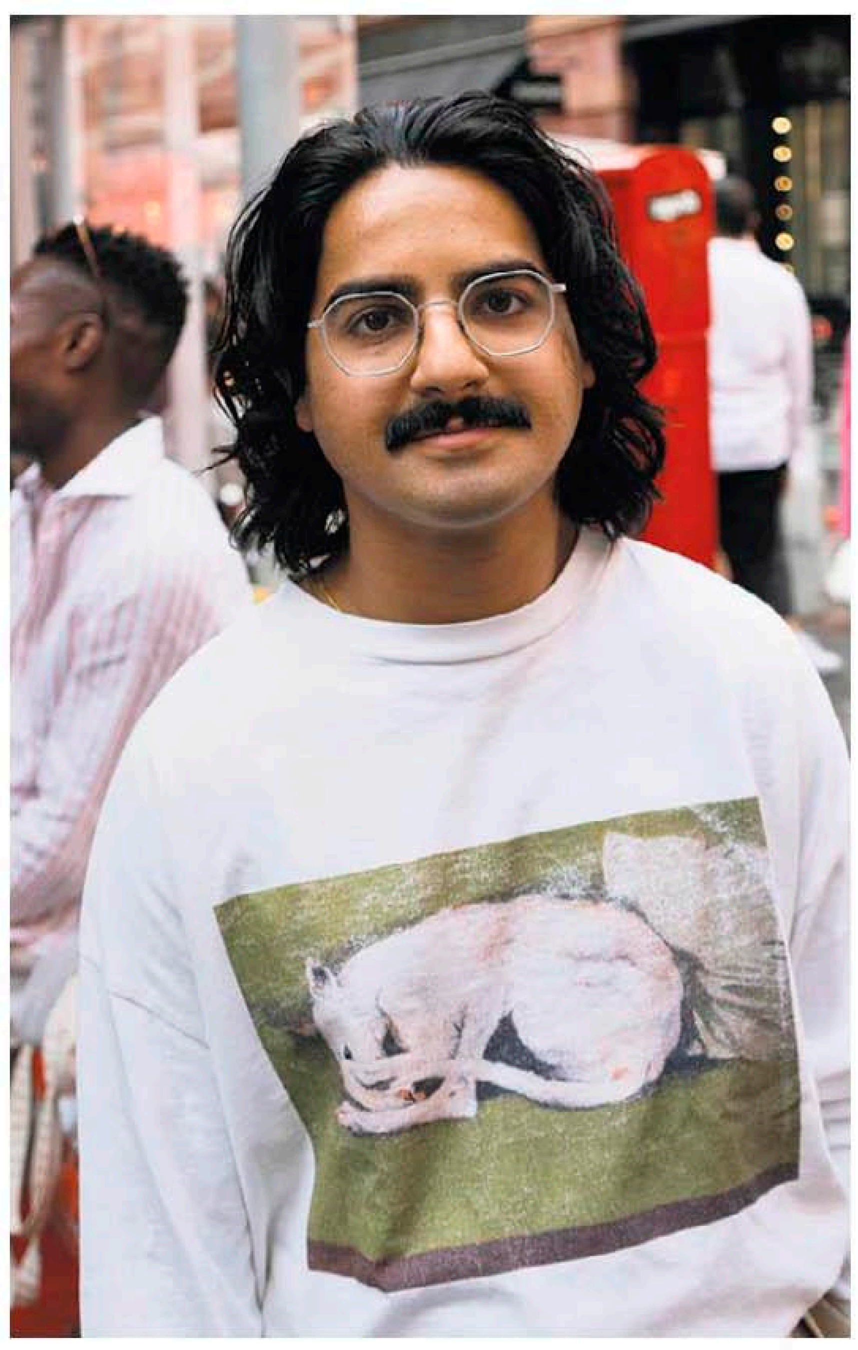


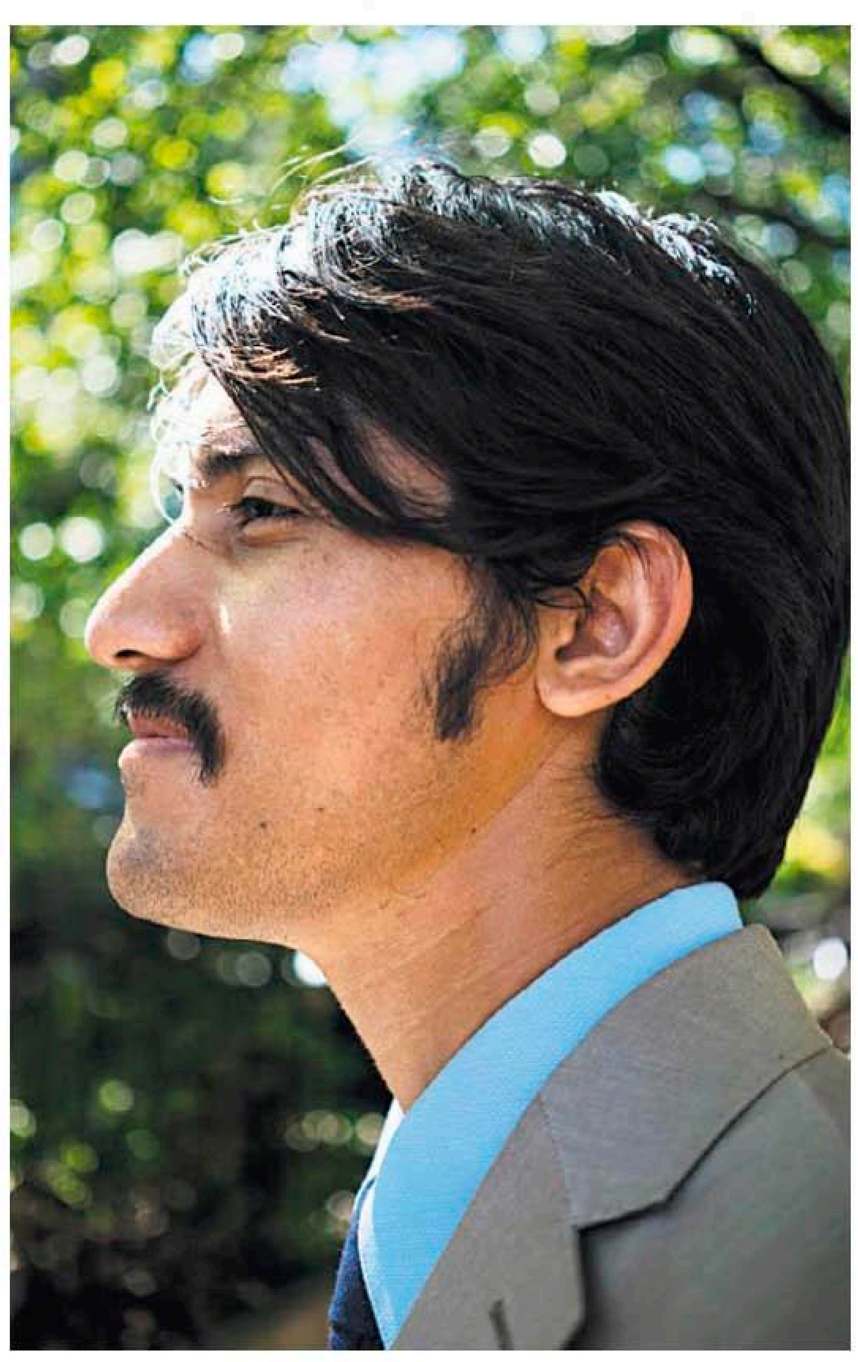






PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALI CHERKIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES





Clockwise from top left: Everett Johnson, 27; Curtis Johnson, left, and Omar Mosqueda, both 28; Sahil Abbi, 24; Isaiah Campa, 28; Rubén Alvarado, 29; John Warren, 38; Alex Booher, 30.

Of course, in many places, such as the Middle East and Mexico, the mustache absorbed its own rich set of associations, and these were often brought to the United States, giving the style different meanings for different groups. For Black Americans, its evocation of authority and assiduousness made the mustache particularly popular among leaders in the civil rights era, including Thurgood Marshall and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., before it lost favor in the '70s. (As Wesley Morris detailed in a 2020 essay in The New York Times, it remains a vivid way of engaging with Black identity.)

By the end of the 1990s, the mustache had fallen so deeply out of fashion that few thought it would ever return. But as a critical mass of mustache wearers has gathered, the style has slowly become free of the subculture associations it garnered in the 1980s, leading more people to imagine it on their own face.

Today, two options have proven particularly popular: a chevron (like that worn by Ron Swanson in "Parks and Recreation") and the prominent mustache embedded in a face of stubble, known as a beardstache (Think Henry Cavil, the Weeknd or any Ph.D. student in Brooklyn). More carefully groomed choices, including the pencil mustache, the parted mustache or the mustache with waxed ends, remain the domain of the uniquely capable among us.

But any style choice that significantly changes one's face is going to feel a little comical, a little ironic and playful. And in a world revisiting the very core of what masculinity means, those associations can be welcomed, too.

"I think a lot of people are grappling with questions of, 'How do I embody my masculine side in a way that feels good and doesn't feel performative?'" said Mr. Johnson, the English teacher in Brooklyn. A mustache, he said, "feels like a fun way to indulge that without compromising being sensitive, being flamboyant and being stylish."

The stand-alone mustache, which requires at least a minimum degree of grooming, also suggests the wearer is someone who takes pride in his style. Ari Goldstein, a student at the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School, who initially grew out his full, dark mustache as a joke in college, enjoys the intentionality of the mustache.

"It makes me seem more approachable and friendly," he said. "It's also a way of looking a little unique without needing to pick an outfit."

Like others, Mr. Goldstein appreciates that his mustache is a conversation starter, though he tries not to get too wrapped up in what others think about it. "I think people map their own meaning onto your mustache," he said. "My mustache means something to me, but people are probably associating it with other mustaches they have feelings toward, so I think the range of reactions I get, which is pretty broad, reflects the broad role of mustaches in society."

As the mustache becomes more popular, many men are realizing that they know very little about its upkeep. What style works for their face? How should it be trimmed? How long does it take to grow out?

"Just because the guy wants something doesn't mean it's necessarily suitable to his face shape or his hair texture or his growth type," said Mr. Conrad, the barber in Vancouver. "Part of it is about working with what you have."

But small adjustments can have a big impact. The only difference, he said, between that dad-friendly Ted Lasso mustache and that badass Burt Reynolds mustache is some subtle shaping.

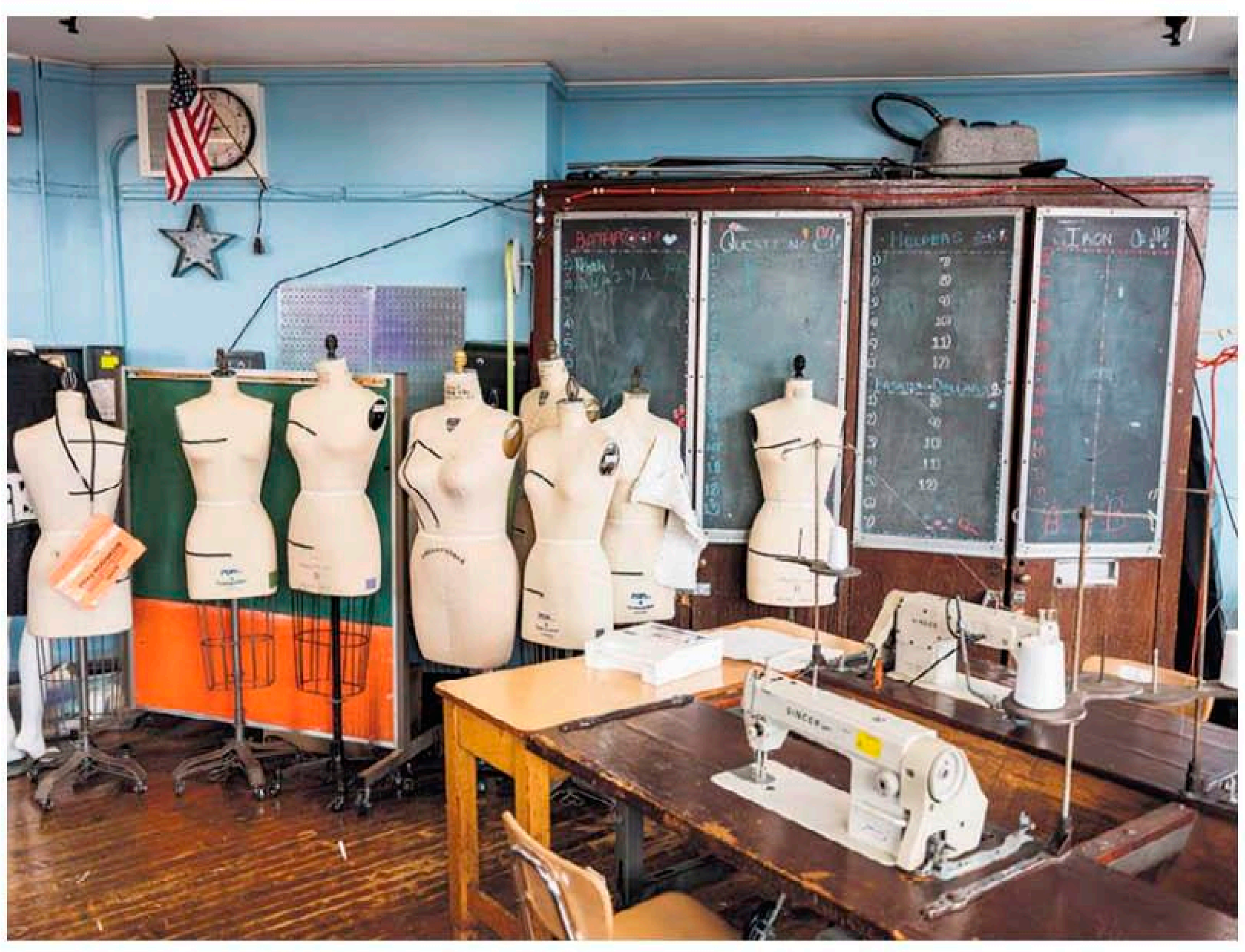
Stylish Statements From the Student Body

The High School of Fashion Industries' spring show was bigger and sassier than ever.

By ALEX VADUKUL



PHOTOGRAPHS BY GUS ARONSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



Above, celebrating with a group photo after the High School of Fashion Industries show. Left, key components inside the classroom. Below, from left: Izzy Brown with jewelry he made; Alijah Dockery and Dylan Gadsden; and Nameera Mehdi.

A procession of teenagers with hard-faced stares strutted through an evening rain during a small fashion show in Lower Manhattan, causing a mixture of delight and bewilderment among passers-by who witnessed the spectacle.

As techno music blasted, one teenager after another stopped to pose for cameras in a cordoned-off area of Gansevoort Plaza in the meatpacking district.

Upon their return to a tented area, they exchanged hugs and high fives with their fellow models. Couples having dinner at Serafina and chic women on their way to Pastis did double takes.

After all, wasn't New York Fashion Week not until September? And why was the audience cheering with the kind of abandon typical of parents at a graduation ceremony?

As it happened, the event that took place May 24 was a graduation ceremony of sorts: This was the annual runway show for the senior class of the High School of Fashion Industries, the only trade-based public school in New York City dedicated to fashion.

The school was founded as a vocational institution in the 1920s and occupies an old Art Deco-style building in Chelsea, and its students prepared for the evening, the highlight of the school year, with the same level of intensity that goes into producing the Marc Jacobs fashion week show.

Tyrone and Marlene Jackson had come to the show from Jamaica, Queens, to support their daughter, Mia, a senior who plans to attend the Fashion Institute of Technology.

"We knew she was talented the moment she started drawing on the couch at 3 years old," Ms. Jackson said. "Fashion Industries has prepared her for what's next."

"People only hear about LaGuardia," she continued, referring to the Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts, "but this school is the best-kept secret in New York. The kids show their gifts at this show."

An annual tradition dating to the 1940s, the event is the High School of Fashion Industries's equivalent to a homecoming football game. It is intended as a showcase for the looks created by seniors in the school's fashion design program. This year's theme, "The Elemental Ball," encouraged designs that evoke nature.

Nearly everyone at the school chips in: Freshmen volunteer as models, sophomores work as makeup assistants and juniors serve as runway photographers. The school even offers a modeling workshop to teach students how to bring ferocity to their runway moves.

The stakes felt higher this year. Until this spring, the show had always taken place on a runway in the school's auditorium. Now the students were showing off their creations in public — in a trendy neighborhood with strong ties to the fashion community, no less — through a partnership with the local Business Improvement District association.

These were the same cobblestones that Carrie Bradshaw once clomped across during her early morning walks back home from clubbing.

And this was the site of last year's Vogue World, a fashion extravaganza presided over by Anna Wintour that drew some of the biggest names in fashion (Balenciaga, Dior, Gucci) and its most dedicated followers and ambassadors (Serena Williams, Gigi Hadid, Lil Nas X).

For the High School of Fashion Industries seniors, the Vogue World connection loomed large.

For those taking part, the chance to showcase their garments at the same site as the Vogue event brought with it a sense of fantasy and affirmation. Just before the students hit the runway, Aiamdra Estrella, who plans to attend Queens College, reflected on the moment.

"This is the first time we've done it like this," said Ms. Estrella, who wore a long turquoise ruffle skirt that suggested the tropical ocean. "Tonight we get to follow in the footsteps of Vogue. We get to show the world who we are."

Caroline Castro, who lives in Woodside, Queens, wore a green floral dress that she had designed from sustainable elements such as rose stems, bottle caps and coffee filters.

"When we learned the show would be where Vogue World happened, we knew how important this was," she said. "We need more eyes on our school. We need better funding. Lots of New Yorkers don't know about us. Some of our sewing machines barely work."

"This dress is for my mother," she added. "She came from Colombia and became a babysitter for families on the Upper West Side. I'm going to Parsons next year, and I'm dreaming big because she gave me everything and I want to give back."

'Where's the Sass?'

Early in the morning on the day before the show, at the school's labyrinthine building on West 24th Street, nervous energy coursed through the fluorescent-lit hallways as students hurried through their final preparations.

In a studio filled with mannequins and old Singer sewing machines, Anyah Lewis, a senior, finessed a set of plastic moth wings. Beside a row of lockers plastered with fliers promoting the show, Jacob Santiago, a freshman, practiced his strut. And on a red brick balcony aglow with sunshine reflecting off the Empire State Building, a rehearsal was taking place.

Seniors lined up along the balcony, some of them yawning as they woke up from their morning commutes from Harlem; Mott Haven, the Bronx; and East New York, Brooklyn. But as soon as Britney Spears's "Gimme More" began playing from a portable speaker, they snapped into action, maintaining hard stares as they vogued down a practice path outlined with tape.

Brenda Rojas, a teacher nicknamed the runway drill sergeant, barked feedback at them. Some 30 years earlier, Ms. Rojas had modeled in the show as a student at the High School of Fashion Industries.

"Give me some animal," she told a weary-looking teenager.

The student placed a hand on her hip.

"That's better," Ms. Rojas said. "Strike that pose. Eat it."

Another student model appeared on her runway.

"Where's the sass?" Ms. Rojas said. "I don't see any sass!"

The drill came to an end 15 minutes later. After the faculty members huddled to deliberate, one of them bellowed, "OK, let's run it again." And the students got back into formation.

Almost a century ago, the High School of Fashion Industries was founded as the Central Needle Trades High School. It operated out of a garment loft, teaching immigrant students how to sew, tailor, drape and sketch.

After an expansion led by the Works Projects Administration, it reopened in 1940 at its current site. The auditorium contains a landmark mural painted by Ernest Fiene that illustrates the struggles of early garment workers, including a depiction of the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire.

In the 1950s, the school changed its name to the current one, and it gradually developed a fully fledged academic curriculum. Today it has some 1,600 students and offers majors including photography, merchandising, visual display, and graphics and illustration. Among the school's best-known recent alumni is the Haitian American designer Kerby Jean-Raymond, who founded the fashion label Pyer Moss.

"We're like the Hogwarts of fashion," Kate Boulamaali, an assistant principal, said in an interview at the school. "And we've been here a long time. This show, whether it was more atelier experience at first, then more runway later, has happened in some form here practically since the beginning."

Ms. Boulamaali cited fashion brands that have supported the show, such as Coach and Stuart Weitzman, which donated shoes this year, and Swarovski, which provides crystals. She mentioned some of the industry figures who have visited the school, like Tommy Hilfiger and Betsey Johnson. She recalled when André Leon Talley was made principal for a day and how he offered critiques of student holiday window designs.

Ms. Boulamaali also stressed the challenges of running a school that must prepare students for careers in an industry that can be as exclusionary as it is glamorous.

"The majority of our kids come from homes that are at or below poverty level," she said. "We're here to make sure they know they also belong and that their financial status shouldn't stop them. Sure, they're going to have to work a little harder, but our kids aren't afraid of hard work."

"We have disabled students here, autistic students and nonverbal students," she added. "You want to see someone with special needs who is still getting a chance to create fashion? Then come into our classrooms. We make sure everyone knows they have a shot."

Showtime

On the morning of the show, crowds of students began their journey from the school to the meatpacking district. Moving as one teenage swarm, they pushed garment racks through the streets for about 10 blocks, to Chelsea Market, where they hunkered down in a private room to begin their backstage prep.

Empty pizza boxes piled up as they coifed one another's hair with curling irons, applied press-on nails. Ali Rendich-Quinlan, a senior, practiced her moves in front of a mirror. Cavelin Sahba, a tall junior who volunteered to model in the show, sat with his eyes closed as Noreamy Almanzar, another senior, dabbed foundation on his face.

"I wanted to step out of my comfort zone, so I volunteered," Mr. Sahba said. "But now I find it empowering. It's not just a walk."

Ms. Almanzar applied eye shadow, saying, "The designer, Jayden, wants a smoky eye, so I'm building everything out so he can look amazing up there tonight."

As showtime approached, about 100 teenagers marched en masse to Gansevoort Plaza and formed a long line behind the runway tent. Parents, alumni, faculty and representatives of the New York City Department of Education were already seated. The sky had suddenly grown dark.

"Get ready — it's going to rain hard," a teacher yelled. "The show must go on!"

As if the weather wasn't enough, it seemed to hit home, for some of the participants, that they were about to put on a fashion show at the same site the pros use. Nameera Mehdi, who wore a pink sari-like dress inspired by her Indian heritage, wasn't intimidated by Vogue's shadow.

"I can't wait to walk," she said. "We're the future generation. They're going to see what we're about."

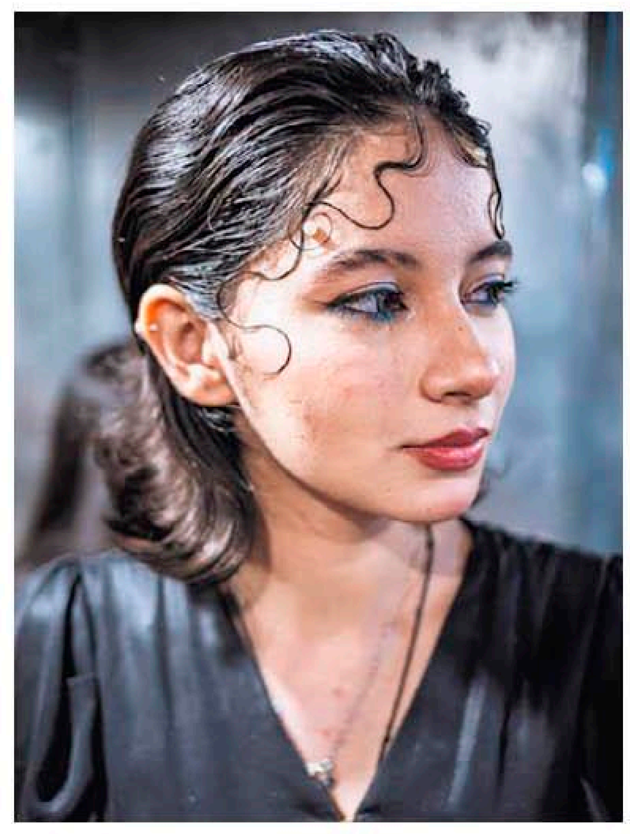
As the line moved forward, the rain began to fall.

"Tell Vogue," Ms. Mehdi said, "that we're coming for them."

'Tonight we get to follow in the footsteps of Vogue. We get to show the world who we are.'











PHOTOGRAPHS BY EMILY KASK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES




Clockwise from top left: Jacques and Courtney Bitoun wearing 2015's streetcar print at Jazz Fest in New Orleans; Ben DeMarais in 2013's irises and brass instruments; Bud Brimberg in the 1999 alligator print from his BayouWear label; John Kelley in 2012's grid representing the city; Jamel Banks in 2019's Pucci-inspired motif.

If Hawaiian Shirts Are Too Subtle for You

Watermelon, crayfish and alligators (with teeth) capture New Orleans's colorful style.

By SHANNON SIMS

NEW ORLEANS — It all started with a poster.

In 1975, while in graduate school at Tulane University, Bud Brimberg had to come up with a project for a business class. His idea: have an artist in New Orleans create a poster as merchandise for a local music festival.

That event, now known as the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, has become one of the city's cultural staples. This year's Jazz Fest, held over seven days in April and May, featured hundreds of performers across 14 stages. According to organizers, about 460,000 people (including staff and vendors) attended.

Since 1975, each Jazz Fest has been commemorated with an artist-designed poster. Mr. Brimberg, 73, still oversees their production. And since 1981, he has also made printed Hawaiian shirts sold at the festival. After introducing the shirts, which also feature a unique motif each year, Mr. Brimberg started to offer other pieces, including shorts and dresses.

The clothes, called BayouWear, have turned into a sort of unofficial uniform for Jazz Fest attendees and performers like Irma Thomas, a soul singer and a festival fixture known for taking the stage in a custom dress featuring the latest print.

"Whenever someone wears the clothing, the festival, along with the culture that created it, lives on," said Quint Davis, the producer of Jazz Fest, who has helped plan the event since it began in 1970.

Lisa Alexis, the director of the Office of Cultural Economy in New Orleans, said the BayouWear clothes had also come to represent the city itself. "Everyone looks forward to the design each year," she said. "It just seems to give a very comprehensive representation and feel of our New Orleans culture."

On a Friday at this year's festival, Ann Patteson, 78, from New Orleans, said she was wearing one of the 18 BayouWear shirts in her collection. For her, the shirts represent just about every Jazz Fest she has attended.

Austin Hajna, a 36-year-old physician assistant from Washington, was one of dozens of people browsing the shirts ($59), shorts ($39), dresses ($59) and sleeveless tops ($49) at a tent selling BayouWear. Many pieces featured the 2023 print — an architectural motif inspired by buildings in the French Quarter — and there were lots of clothes from past festivals.

Mr. Hajna, who had a drink in his hand, was wearing a blue shirt covered with green streetcars and turquoise palm trees, the 2015 print. He said it was one of two BayouWear shirts he owns, adding that he planned to buy a third that day, "right after a sip of this vodka."

Jamel Banks, a 38-year-old engineer from Houston, was in line behind Mr. Hajna. His shirt featured a colorful Pucci-inspired print of a dancing man that was introduced in 2019. The shirts, he said, "feel very fatherish — but a cool dad."

"I'm ready for the matching shorts now," Mr. Banks added, "and something for my girlfriend."

Though clothes with past BayouWear prints are still sold, certain designs are harder to find. Original samples and stock of the 2001 print — plates of sugar-dusted beignets next to mugs of cafe au lait — were destroyed during Hurricane Katrina, Mr. Brimberg said.

BayouWear garments are made entirely of rayon, which Mr. Brimberg said he chose because it dries fast, hangs loose and displays colors more vividly than other fabrics. "The gradations were missing in cotton," he said, zooming in on a photo of the 2003 print (a jumble of crawfish) to show how the color of the crustaceans faded from a deep orange into a pale coral.

Mr. Brimberg — who grew up in Brooklyn and has the mannerisms, and accent, of Larry David — comes up with ideas for BayouWear prints himself before finding artists to help bring them to life. He said his references over the years have included pointillist and Cubist art, the brand Marimekko and the French glassmaker Lalique.

The ideas for the prints, he said, typically strike at random, often while he is roaming around New Orleans. The first print, in 1981, was inspired by a palm-tree-dotted shirt on a man playing an upright piano in that year's Jazz Fest poster.

Kathy Schorr, a textile artist in New Orleans who helped make BayouWear's 2023 architectural print, said she loves how fluid the designs are. "You can't tell what it is until you're right up on it," Ms. Schorr said. "They just look like a beautiful pattern from a distance."

The buttons on many BayouWear shirts are no less thoughtfully designed than the prints. To match certain motifs, Mr. Brimberg has had buttons custom made to look like tiny drums (for a percussion-themed print from 2016), guitar picks (for a print from 2006) and water-meter covers (for this year's architectural print).

For shirts featuring yellow-eyed alligators from 1999, Mr. Brimberg had buttons made to look like the reptiles' teeth. "I went down to the Voodoo museum and bought some alligator teeth," he recalled. "Then I took them to my dentist, since they were kind of ugly, and asked if he could do some cosmetic dentistry to polish them up. And I had that cast as a button."

On the opening day of this year's Jazz Fest, Kayla Biskupovich, 26, from New Orleans, was wearing an alligator-print shirt over a dress covered in watermelon slices, the print from 2014. "This dress was my mom's," said Ms. Biskupovich, who graduated recently from Louisiana State University. "She bought it the year this pattern came out."

For a better fit, she tied knots at the dress's back to tighten it. "I didn't want to cut it, because that would be sacrilegious," Ms. Biskupovich said.

"I also wanted to wear the gators," she added as she held out one of her shirt's triangular white buttons. "Look at the teeth! Could you die?!"

The Model Who Rewrote the Trans Narrative

CONTINUED FROM PAGE D1

brought her along for a gig at an Armani store. The experience provided Ms. Rocero's entree into the industry. Modeling eventually brought her to New York, where she booked commercial jobs and lingerie shoots, appeared in a John Legend music video and became a habitué of the early-2000s, bottles-and-models scene at clubs like Marquee, BED and Cain.

In the Philippines, Ms. Rocero lived openly as a transgender woman with the support of both her relatives and chosen family, but she could not legally change her sex marker. In the United States, on the other hand, she was legally recognized as a woman on her documents, but she worked "stealth" in the fashion industry, passing as a cisgender woman while living in constant fear that her trans identity would tank her career.

She went to great lengths to work undetected in the modeling industry. On sets, she sometimes feigned a neck injury to avoid exposing her Adam's apple. Surgical scars were explained away as botched bikini waxes. She carried tampons in her bag.

After eight years of modeling, the hiding had taken a toll on her emotional and physical health, she said. She was tired and anxious, and had developed a bad case of eczema.

After the financial crash of 2008, Ms. Rocero explored careers in other fields — magazine publishing, sustainable garbage bags, hydroponic gardening. Nothing quite stuck.

"She was always ambitious and always willing to hustle," said Ilka Gregory, 46, who has been a close friend of Ms. Rocero's since 2009. "But I do think she lacked that focus and lacked that calling."

While celebrating her 30th birthday in Tulum, Mexico, she told her boyfriend that she was ready to come out publicly. At that very moment, hundreds of newborn turtles suddenly appeared on the beach. She took it as a sign.

"I was like, 'If I'm going to do this, I'm going to do it in the biggest possible way,'" she said. "'I'm going to do it as a TED Talk.'"

She delivered her speech, "Why I Must Come Out," in March 2014. The first TED Talk that focused on transgender issues, it has been watched over 3.6 million times.

Her TED appearance started Ms. Rocero's career as an eloquent public speaker. She became a sought-after guest at high-profile gatherings like the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, and the Milken Institute Global Conference.

In the back seat of a car en route to the West Village, she reflected on her shift from model to advocate. "I was in a trap being stealth," she said. "And then I felt like I entered a new trap, which is respectability politics."

Ms. Rocero said she never felt fully comfortable in the role of trans role model. At first she was excited to assume what she called an Angelina Jolie persona — a beautiful, world-trotting champion of social issues. But then she realized maybe she would rather be a Tyra Banks.

For her, that meant starting a production company and trying her hand at directing.

'I was like, "If I'm going to do this, I'm going to do it in the biggest possible way."'

GEENA ROCERO
MODEL AND MEMOIRIST

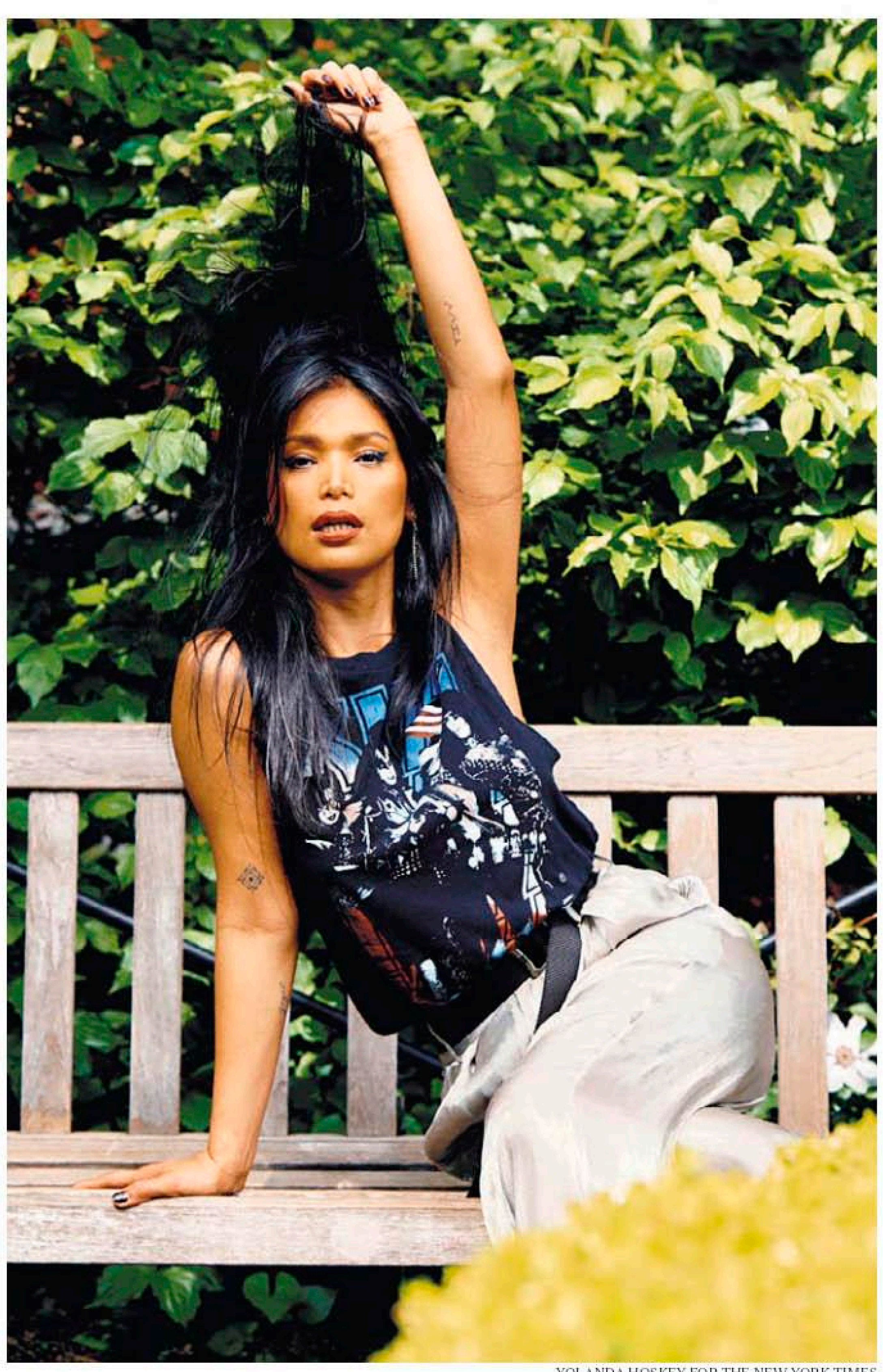
It also meant posing for Playboy in 2019, only the second openly trans Playmate.

"Ines was the first one," Ms. Rocero said, referring to the French model Ines Rau. "I'm the first trans Asian Pacific Islander and the first trans Playmate of the Year." She proudly added that she had brought a Playboy reporter along to a speaking engagement at the United Nations.

In the West Village, Ms. Rocero once again jaywalked while approaching Rosecrans, a combination florist and coffee shop. When I caught up to her, I said that while she could stop traffic, I certainly could not. "Sure you can," she said with a hair toss. "You just have to believe it."

She sniffed flowers and sang along to "Weak" by SWV before tucking into a carrot cake muffin and a soy latte. She was enjoying a few days in New York before heading to Miami for Summit at Sea, a symposium aboard a Virgin cruise ship, whose mix of lectures and parties has earned it the nickname "Learning Man."

Richard Branson, the Virgin Group founder, whom Ms. Rocero counts as a friend, was aboard for the summit. In an email, Mr. Branson praised Ms. Rocero, writing, "In addition to what she's brought to these important conversations, she was always the first to get everyone up and dancing during our gatherings!"



YOLANDA HOSKEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

At 39, Geena Rocero has had a varied career, which so far has included appearing in Playboy and speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

Was Ms. Rocero worried about getting seasick while aboard the cruise ship? "No, I'm Moana, darling," she said with a laugh. The topic of Moana, the movie character, sent her down a conversational rabbit hole about precolonial languages, early Pacific trade routes that influenced the Indigenous population of Madagascar and the preponderance of gender-fluid identities among Polynesian cultures.

"I'm a closet anthropologist," Ms. Rocero said. "There was a moment when my IG handle was called 'NatGeena.'"

Looking at her phone, Ms. Rocero realized she was running late for a scheduled appearance at the PEN America World Voices Festival. Walking briskly toward Washington Square Park, she tried jaywalking once more, this time stopping short as a car took the right of way.

"It doesn't always work," she said with a giggle. She arrived at the festival just moments before the event started.

Speaking on a panel titled "Politicized: Writing Trans Narratives Today," she described the two-year process of writing "Horse Barbie," citing Anthony Bourdain and Cathy Park Hong as literary inspirations.

According to Ms. Rocero, the title of her memoir is a reclamation of an insult hurled at her during her pageant days. Other girls called her Horse because of her dark skin, protruding upper lip and long neck. Ms. Rocero's mentor and, as she put it, "trans mother," Tigerlily Garcia Temporosa, lovingly modified the epithet to Horse Barbie.

Ms. Garcia Temporosa, 46, who works as a stage manager for a live variety show in the Philippines, remains close with Ms. Rocero. The typeface used for the cover and chapter headings of "Horse Barbie" was created from Ms. Garcia Temporosa's handwriting.

For years, Ms. Garcia Temporosa had to hide Ms. Rocero's modeling success from her friends in the Philippines for fear of someone leaking her trans identity. "When she sent a magazine from the U.S., I hide it in my closet," Ms. Garcia Temporosa said during a recent video call.

Now, Ms. Garcia Temporosa has pulled the magazines from their hiding place.

Ms. Rocero is also no longer hiding. Her memoir does not shy away from topics like colorism, gender disclosure, sex work and the nuts and bolts of medical transition.

During the panel at the literary festival, Ms. Rocero recounted an explicit passage in the book in which she demonstrates the mechanics of post-surgery orgasm for a fellow trans woman.

"It's pleasure that I wanted to share between trans sisters," she said. "It's something that we were not allowed to access for so long and to be able to share that and to speak about it. . . . " Ms. Rocero choked up as she trailed off. She took a breath.

"I'm crying out of happiness," she said. "These are happy tears."

MOST STYLES-ISH

Dressing Up For the Cameras At Cannes

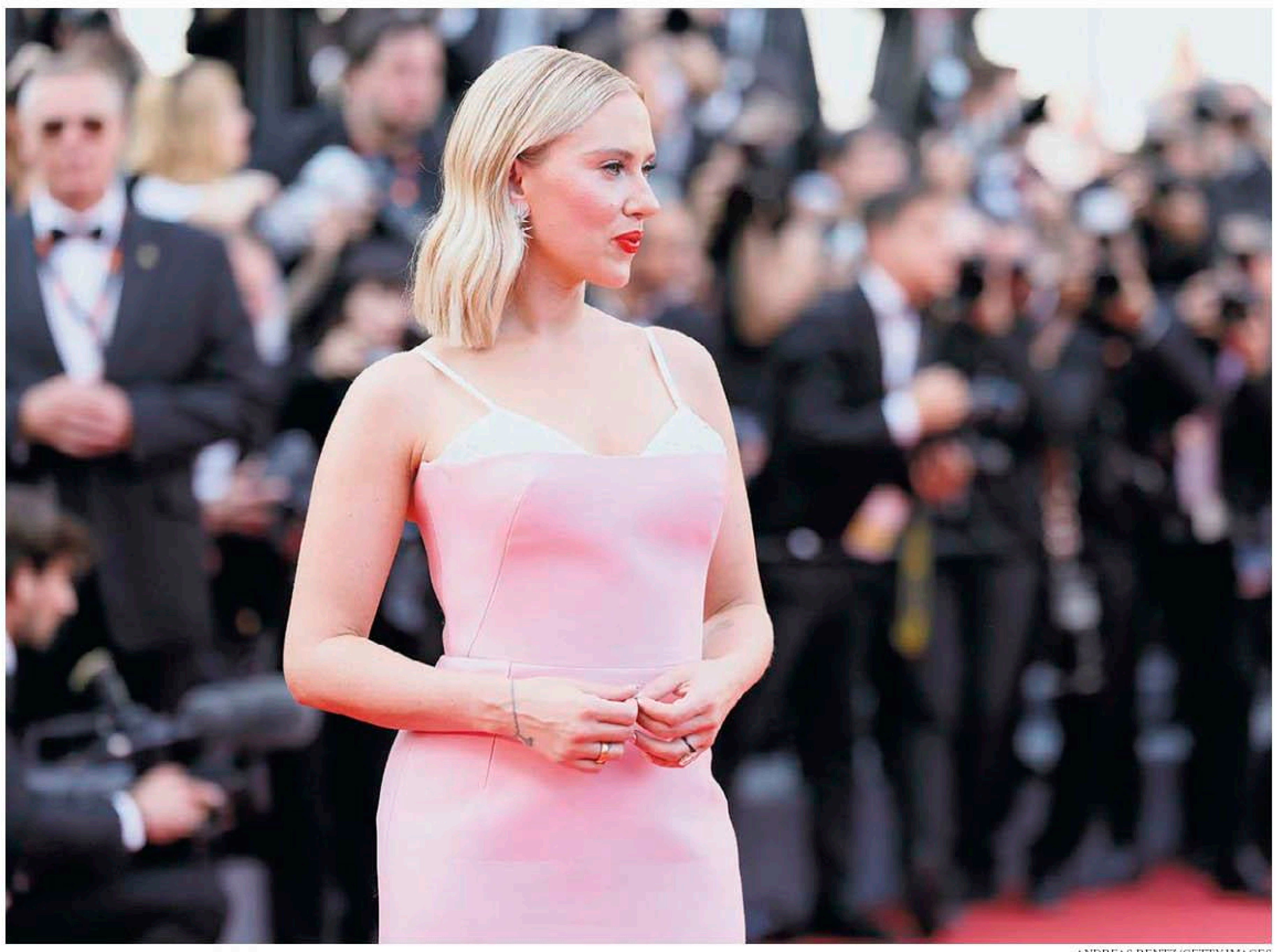
There has been a lot of head-turning fashion on the French Riviera lately. Though some of it was spotted on guests at the Monaco Grand Prix (hello Bad Bunny in torso-hugging Jean Paul Gaultier), much of it came from the Cannes Film Festival, which ended on Saturday.

As one might expect from a pack of A-list celebrities attending a star-studded festival in a particularly glamorous location, there were lots of gowns and tuxedos. But in contrast to the Oscars or other awards ceremonies, there were many daytime events at Cannes, which gave festival attendees repeated chances to dress up and take style risks.

There were a lot of outfits that caught our attention during the almost two-week festival, including Jennifer Lawrence's red Dior gown and flip-flops (most comfortable!); Naomi Campbell's Valentino dress and flowing pink feathered cape (most ethereal!); and the nearly identical tan linen blazers that David Zaslav, a media executive, and Graydon Carter, an editor, wore as co-hosts of a party (most coordinated!).

But the looks on this list stood out more than most, in part because all drew strong opinions.

Reporting was contributed by Stella Bugbee, Vanessa Friedman, Elizabeth Paton, Callie Holtermann, Anthony Rotunno and Jessica Testa.



ANDREAS RENTZ/GETTY IMAGES

With a contrasting white top and straps, Scarlett Johansson's pink Prada sheath dress at the Cannes festival gave the illusion of an exposed bra.

HELEN MIRREN

Most Blue Crush!



MOHAMMED BADRA/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

To match her cornflower-blue Del Core gown (and her nails), the actress wore blue streaks in her wavy silver hair, the colors of which recalled a frothing ocean.

NATALIE PORTMAN

Most Jackie O!



JOEL C RYAN/INVISION, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

In oversize cat-eye sunglasses and a belted Dior mini dress (and matching jacket), the actress brought a dose of the former first lady's style to La Croisette.

MARION COTILLARD

Most Coachella!



GARETH CATTERMOLE/GETTY IMAGES

Her twee Chanel sweater set and pink bleached jorts were textbook festival style — music festival style, that is.

VIOLA DAVIS

Most Volume!



ANDREAS RENTZ/GETTY IMAGES

A towering Afro and a colossal ostrich-feather stole punched up the actress's otherwise simple Valentino dress.

TROYE SIVAN

Most Negative Space!

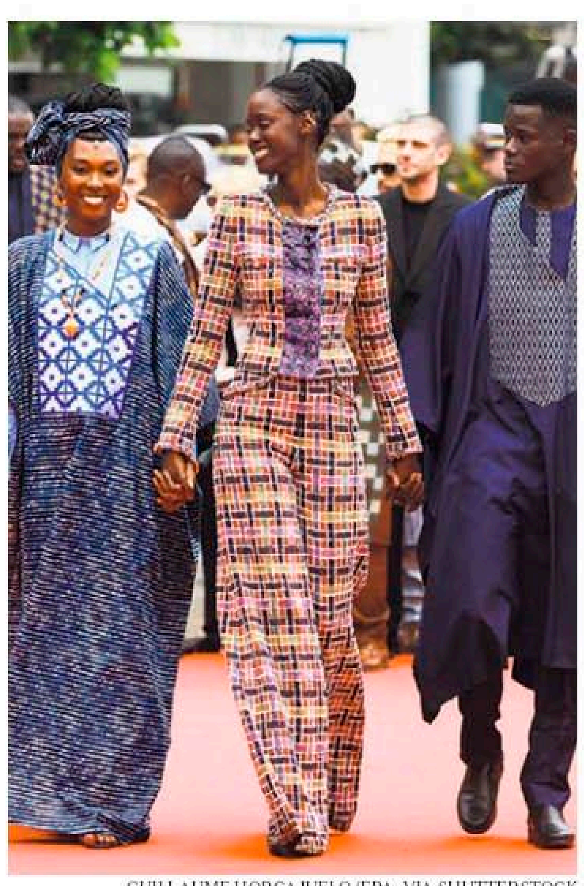


JOEL C RYAN/INVISION, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

The singer's ensemble of Valentino shorts, shoulder-baring shirt and tie advanced a new definition of business casual.

RAMATA-TOULAYE SY

Most Power-Glam!



GUILLAUME HORCAJUELO/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

Amid the many penguin suits at Cannes, the director's wide-leg multicolor Chanel pantsuit was a sartorial unicorn.

LILY GLADSTONE

Most In Bloom!



PASCAL LE SEGRETAIN/GETTY IMAGES

An understated hairstyle toned down the drama of the actress's floral Valentino cape dress and three-tiered earrings by Jamie Okuma, a Native American designer.

ELLE FANNING

Most Antique Silverware!

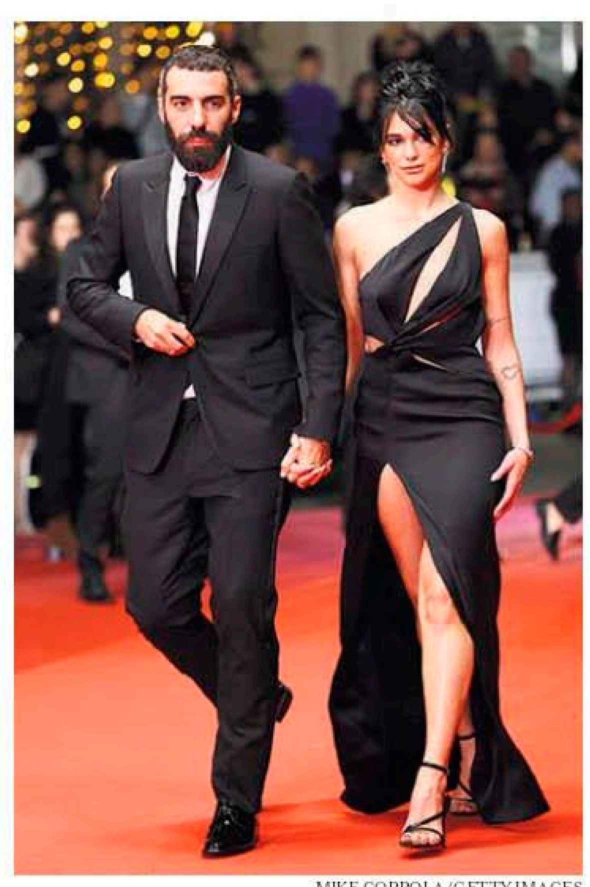


VIA PACO RABANNE

The actress's metallic Paco Rabanne dress was suspended by what looked like a piece of cutlery and had a skirt that looked as though it could cut someone who came too close.

DUA LIPA

Most Accesorized!

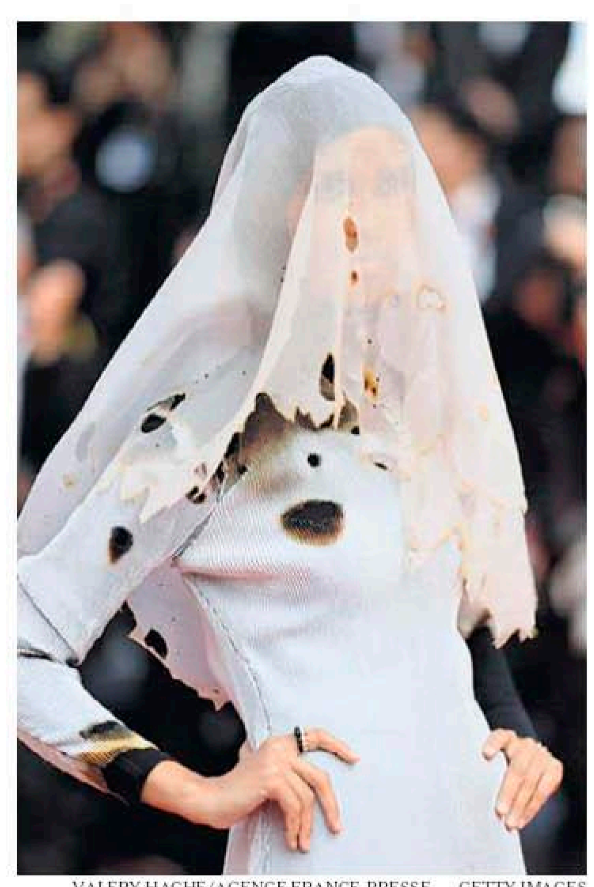


MIKE COPPOLA/GETTY IMAGES

The singer paired her sleek, one-shoulder Celine dress with accessories that included jewelry, tattoos and her reported boyfriend, the filmmaker Romain Gavras.

RAWDAH MOHAMED

Most Smoldering!

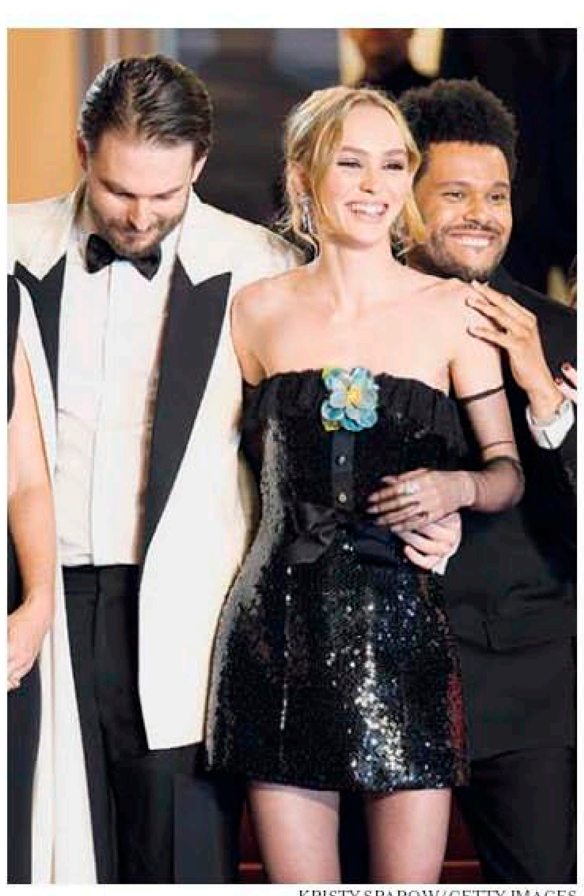


VALERY HACHE/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

The model set the carpet ablaze in a Robert Wun gown covered in what appeared to be burn marks. Over her head was a tattered veil that matched the distressed dress.

LILY-ROSE DEPP

Most Dressing-Her-Age!



KRISTY SPARROW/GETTY IMAGES

Or *almost* her age: The 24-year-old actress's sequined Chanel mini dress is from 1994, making it a few years older than she is.

FAN BINGBING

Most Scenic!

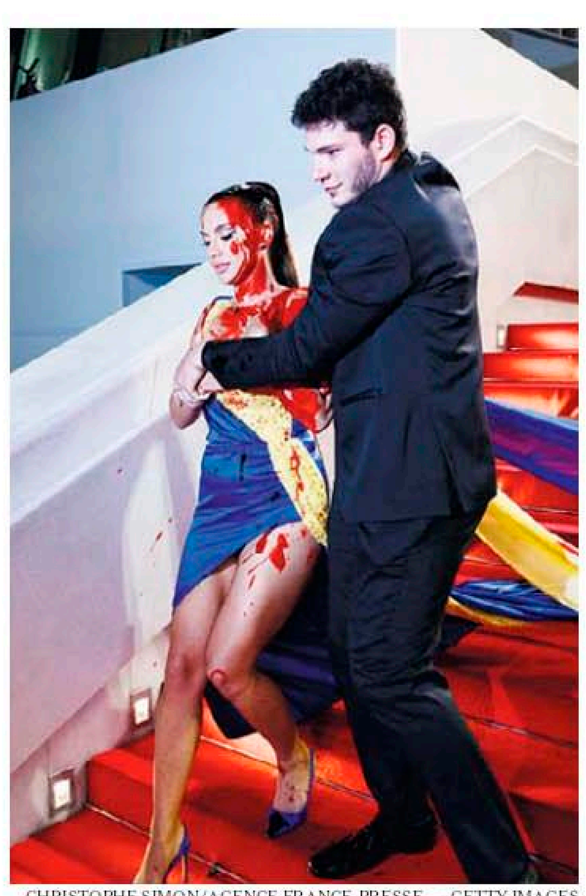


VITTORIO ZUNINO CELOTTO/GETTY IMAGES

Printed on the actress's Christopher Bu gown was a design featuring a roaring tiger in a bamboo forest that extended onto the dress's train.

ILONA CHERNOBAI

Most On Message!



CHRISTOPHE SIMON/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

As the Ukrainian influencer ascended the stairs wearing a blue-and-yellow gown, the colors of the Ukrainian flag, she popped balloons filled with a red liquid on her head.

JENNIE KIM

Most 'I Do'!



MIKE COPPOLA/GETTY IMAGES

The Blackpink member was a vision in white — specifically, a Chanel bridal gown made (slightly) less sweet by black tulle poking out from the bodice.

ORLANDO BLOOM

Most Painterly!



SCOTT GARFITT/INVISION, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

The green and blue streaks down the actor's pale Paul Smith suit were a risk — as were the chunky soles on his matching shoes.



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